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ABSTRACT

As the case study of one particular Home Instruction Program for the Preschool Youngster (HIPPY) project, this study is designed to allow others to reflect on their own program experiences. HIPPY was developed in 1969 by the National Council of Jewish Women's Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Israel). The first HIPPY programs in the United States began in 1984, and by the 1990-91 school year there were 41 HIPPY programs in 16 states. In the U.S., HIPPY is a 2-year program in children of 4 and 5 are instructed by a parent using program materials available in both Spanish and English. Parents receive weekly contact, either through home visits from paraprofessional trained by the program or in group meetings. The site of the study, "Brownswell," is a large community in an major city in the Northeast. In Brownswell, group meetings are held only once a month. Data came from site visits, the review of program documents, and interviews with 5 parents and 7 paraprofessionals, each working with 7 to 10 mothers. This was the third and last year of Brownswell's HIPPY program. Personnel changes in the sponsoring agency were detrimental to the funding efforts. Funding changed to a year-to-year basis, creating a sense of uncertainty. The program manager resigned, and was replaced, and the number of families served was reduced. HIPPY did sponsor a community literacy program, a voter registration drive, and the establishment of a HIPPY library featuring African American books. The experiences of this program show much about the operation of a home visitation preschool program in an urban area. Although there was no HIPPY program in Brownswell by the end of the study, there was interest in re-establishing the program. Appendixes describe the curriculum, present aide, parent, and group interviews, and contain a report of a quasi-experimental study of HIPPY. (SLD)

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VOICES FROM THE FIELD

A Case Study of One Inner-City HIPPY Program

by Meg Lovejoy & Miriam Westheimer, Ed.D.

APRIL 1993

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HOME INSTRUCTION PROGRAM FOR PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS
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This study was funded by a grant from Save the Children Federation to the National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Center for the Child, by NCJW, and by HIPPY USA.

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As the on-site researcher, I would like to thank all the people who supported me in completing this project.

Special thanks go to Miriam Westheimer who acted as my advisor and mentor on the project. I am grateful to her for providing me with the opportunity to conduct the study and for sharing with me her expertise and enthusiasm for the ethnographic method. Miriam's ongoing reassurance and support gave me the confidence to continue during times of uncertainty.

I would also like to thank Tanette Blackman and Jean Jackson, the two HIPPY Field Coordinators for the Brownswell program, for their support of the study and for their cooperation with the data collection efforts. They provided me with thoughtful insight into the Brownswell community and the HIPPY program.

I am especially thankful to the seven paraprofessionals who allowed me into their lives with such openness and warmth. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to become friends with this group of strong and feisty women!

—Meg Lovejoy

Soon after Meg completed the fieldwork she was offered a research position on another exciting project. It was then up to me to take our draft report and see it through its final stages. Given many competing priorities, this took quite some time!

Still, it would not have happened at all without the help and guidance of several important people. Chaya Piotrkowski and Amy Baker reviewed and critiqued previous drafts; the study is undoubtedly more informative as a result. Gail Griffin applied her exceptional editing skills; the study is undoubtedly more readable as a result. Rick Connelly agreed to have The Dushkin Publishing Group fund the editing and publishing; the study is available as a result.

Thank you all!

—Miriam Westheimer

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INTRODUCTION

The Study

Although its name has been changed, Brownswell is a real neighborhood in a large city in New York State. It was supported, in part, by the agency sponsoring the HIPPY Brownswell program. The on-site researcher was a research assistant at the NCJW Center for the Child, a research institute within the National Council of Jewish Women. At that time, HIPPY USA, the national network for all local HIPPY programs, was a research and development project of the NCJW Center for the Child. The senior researcher supervising data collection and data analysis was a Senior Research Associate at the Center and the Director of HIPPY USA.

The coordinator of the Brownswell HIPPY program was particularly interested in a study that would help her understand how the program would take hold in her community and how the program participants (parents and paraprofessionals) would view the program. Because of its sensitivity to cultural context and its emphasis on the description of a culture and setting from the point of view of its participants, a study employing ethnographic methods was thought to be the most appropriate.

A few months prior to the start of the study, the researcher responsible for on-site data collection made a site visit to the program in order to write an article about it for the HIPPY newsletter. During this visit she met the coordinator and two of the paraprofessionals. It was at that time that the coordinator expressed an interest in documenting the HIPPY program in Brownswell. The interest of the local program staff combined with the staff availability and expertise at the NCJW Center for the Child gave birth to this study.

This is a case study of *one* inner-city HIPPY program; the findings cannot necessarily be generalized. Rather it is expected that the data, the discussions, and the emerging themes will allow others to reflect on their own programs, perhaps gaining some new insights into what the HIPPY program can offer to parents, children, and communities.

*The HIPPY Program**

Program History

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) was developed in 1969 by the National Council of Jewish Women's Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. In 1982, the first international conference was held at Hebrew University. Since that time HIPPY programs have been operating in seven countries. The first HIPPY programs in the United States were initiated in 1984. At the time of this study, in the 1990–91 school year, HIPPY USA sponsored 41 programs in 16 states.

*The information in this section is taken from nationally disseminated materials prepared by HIPPY USA, the national network of U.S. HIPPY programs.

Overview of the Program Model

HIPPY in the United States is a two-year program in which children of four and five are instructed by a parent. In each of the two years there are thirty weeks of activities, nine storybooks and sixteen colored plastic shapes, which are scheduled to coincide roughly with the school year. All materials are available in both Spanish and English. Parents receive weekly contact, alternating between home visits and group meetings. Paraprofessionals are hired from a pool of eligible parents and are supervised by a professional coordinator. Paraprofessionals make the home visits; the coordinator facilitates the group meetings with the help of the paraprofessionals.

The 41 programs throughout the United States serve different ethnic populations in different geographic regions in rural, urban, and suburban settings. While all HIPPY sites are expected to follow the basic model, described in more detail below, the character of each program varies considerably, reflecting the specific needs of the population it serves, the particular program vision and leadership style of the local coordinator, and funding requirements.

Use of Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals are usually drawn from the community being served and are chosen from the pool of parents interested in program participation. The paraprofessionals work up to twenty hours a week. Each is responsible for instructing a group of eight to twelve parents on how to use the HIPPY materials with their children and for monitoring each family's progress throughout the program year. In most cases, they also use the HIPPY activities with their own four- or five-year-old child. Paraprofessionals are trained in the curriculum and accompanying instructions for paraprofessionals before they visit the homes every other week to bring the week's activity packet to the parents. Home visits provide opportunities for the paraprofessional to get to know each of his/her parents and to discuss problems concerning both the parent's and child's participation in the program.

Paraprofessionals are used to provide this service because it is assumed that they will be able to identify with the parents and the kinds of challenges they face. In addition, it is assumed that their appreciation for, and knowledge of, their unique communities will help them to develop rapport with the families and to present the curriculum in a culturally-relevant and appropriate manner.

Method of Instruction

The paraprofessional role plays the HIPPY activities with the parent. This method of instruction is designed to promote a comfortable, non-threatening learning environment in which there is room for making and correcting mistakes. When parents play the role of child, the paraprofessional can tell whether or not the parent understands the activity. In addition, role-playing promotes empathy with the child who will be doing these same activities during that week.

Paraprofessional Meetings

The paraprofessionals meet weekly as a group with the local coordinator. The goals of the meetings are to role play the materials, to report and discuss the previous week's work, and to share experiences and problems. Different techniques for handling problems can be discussed in the group. If a problem is outside the sphere of competence of the paraprofessional, the coordinator may handle the problem by making a home visit or, if necessary, by referring a parent to an appropriate social service agency.

Group Meetings

On alternate weeks, the activity packets are distributed at group meetings. At the start of the meeting the paraprofessional reviews with the parents their children's work from the previous week. By sharing problems and suggesting solutions that work from their own experience, the parents get to know each other and receive support from the group. The group then role plays the next week's materials.

The second part of the meeting consists of an enrichment activity such as a lecture, a demonstration, or an activity relevant to the parental role. The enrichment activities vary considerably from site to site, according to the needs and interests of the parents and the interests of the local coordinator. Topics may be suggested by the paraprofessional, coordinator, or parents and may include, health and hygiene, children's books and games, handicrafts, preparation for the holidays, or school and community issues.

Group meetings are designed to make the parents feel comfortable in raising educational concerns as well as parenting and social issues for discussion. The formation of a support group is an important part of the model, as it breaks the social isolation many of these parents feel and enables them to recognize in each other valuable sources of support and information.

HIPPY Activities

The HIPPY materials, which can be compared to a well-designed lesson plan, are written for parents who have had unsuccessful school experiences themselves and may feel incapable of teaching their children what they consider "school knowledge." The HIPPY structure is designed to guarantee successful learning experiences using the parent as the teacher. The materials are easy for the parents to follow and are designed to elicit regular feedback from the child so that the parent can observe his/her child learning. In this way, parents gain confidence in teaching and interacting with their children. Each packet contains ten exercises (two for each day of the week) which take about fifteen minutes a day to complete.

The HIPPY curriculum focuses on language development, sensory and perceptual discrimination skills, and problem solving. (See the Scope and Sequence charts on pp. 27–28.) Language instruction centers around a set of storybooks specifically written for HIPPY. The eighteen storybooks used in the two-year program are high quality children's books that cover a wide range of family configurations, physical settings, and age-appropriate themes. They are designed to introduce such skills as listening, vocabulary-building, and story creation. Games are used to teach and practice visual, auditory and tactile discrimination skills. The materials also provide opportunities for the parents to extend the HIPPY activities, which can result in creative, open-ended learning experiences for the child.

The Coordinator

The coordinator is responsible for the overall administration of the HIPPY program at his/her site. In order to prepare for their role, all new coordinators attend a special intensive one-week training program, where they learn about the history and philosophy of HIPPY, how to administer the program, and how to work with the curriculum. The training program is also an opportunity to meet other coordinators and to discuss individual issues and concerns as a group.

The coordinator selects parents and paraprofessionals for the program, trains the paraprofessionals, and monitors their progress. The coordinator also makes the initial contacts with the families and discusses the program with each parent in the home in order to make sure he/she understands exactly what is involved before agreeing to join. The coordinator is also responsible for organizing and implementing the group meetings, as well as other enrichment activities such as special events, outings, projects, and parties.

Coordinators are professionals in education or related fields. The particular interest and expertise of the coordinator can strongly shape the direction of the local program, especially regarding the kinds of group meetings and enrichment activities held.

The Brownswell Community

Brownswell is a large community located in a major city in the Northeast. As of the 1980 census, Brownswell had a population of approximately 133,000 persons. It is a predominantly African-American community with a large proportion of low-income families. In 1980, 85% of the population was African-American, 13% Hispanic, 1% white, and 1% other. Thirty-seven percent of the population had incomes below the federal poverty level, and a corresponding percentage of the population received some form of income support. A third of all families in Brownswell were headed by single women with children under eighteen years of age.

A high percentage of the employed population (56%) worked in service and blue-collar occupations. However, a fairly substantial proportion (10%) worked in managerial or professional occupations. The remaining 34% of the employed population worked in middle-level white collar positions in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations.

Brownswell is beset by many of the problems associated with poor neighborhoods, including high rates of unemployment, crime, adult and infant mortality, and high school dropouts. According to the Department of Labor statistics for 1989, Brownswell had an unemployment rate of 11.7%, compared to a 5.8% rate in the larger Centerville metropolitan area. Crime rates in Brownswell were higher than in other areas of Centerville. According to the Centerville Police Department, 1,150 violent crimes were committed during the first nine months of 1990 in the police precinct in which the HIPPY program is located.

Health Department statistics from 1988 indicate that mortality rates in Brownswell were almost double the city-wide mortality rates of 21.7 per thousand. The infant mortality rate in Brownswell was 25.3 deaths per 1,000 live births, com-

pared to the city-wide rate of 15.3 deaths per 1,000 live births. Recent statistics indicate that 67% percent of adult residents had not graduated from high school. In 1984, Brownswell had a 70% high-school drop-out rate.

Brownswell is an old community, with a large concentration of brownstones and townhouses. Many of the buildings date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Brownswell was one of the more fashionable and wealthy neighborhoods in the city. In fact, more than 90% of the housing in Brownswell today was built before 1919. By the 1920's the largely white upper middle-class population had begun to move outward to the suburbs, and Brownswell became more accessible to lower-income, ethnically diverse families. From this period onwards, Brownswell gradually became the largely African-American, lower-income neighborhood that it is today. The brownstones, once owned by single families, were converted to rooming houses or divided into multiple-unit dwellings. Housing became overcrowded, and many of the once stately homes were allowed to deteriorate.

Brownswell has a serious shortage of available housing. Today many of the beautiful, multi-colored brownstones have crumbling facades; others are boarded up completely. Rubble-strewn vacant lots are widespread. According to the district manager of the Brownswell Community Board, 40% of the parcels in Brownswell are either vacant buildings or vacant lots. Also, rents are artificially inflated due to the large number of unoccupied buildings. The program coordinator said rents start at about $500, while housing subsidies are only $295 a month. Unfortunately, though many new condominiums are being constructed by private developers, most are not affordable to the average Brownswell resident. However, certain sections of Brownswell are well-preserved or have been restored as historical landmark areas.

Despite Brownswell's many problems, the residents in many pockets in the area have developed a strong sense of community. Brownswell has a relatively high proportion of home ownership, which has created stability and a sense of community pride. Residents have organized tenants' associations, block associations, and community programs to combat neighborhood problems and have become involved in issues of government service delivery and representation. The churches have also played an increasingly important role in mobilizing residents and city and local officials to deal with community issues.

Since the 1960's and 1970's, a strong community redevelopment movement has emerged which has made real progress towards developing community improvement programs. Most notable among these efforts is the Brownswell Development Corporation, established in the 1960's, which has implemented many redevelopment initiatives, including the construction of new housing, development of commercial districts, rehabilitation of housing, mortgage and rehabilitation assistance to home owners, job training for neighborhood workers, and assistance to small businesses. Currently, several redevelopment efforts are underway. The city has established a loan program to those who buy city properties and turn them into apartments with low-cost rentals. Other vacant properties are also being rehabilitated and turned into subsidized housing units under city, neighborhood, and private programs.

HIPPY in Brownswell

The Brownswell HIPPY program is sponsored by a large international organization whose goal is to improve the conditions of children throughout the world. The mission of this particular agency is to enhance the quality of life for low-income children and families through a broad range of development efforts including independent schools, community centers, day-care programs, and self-help homesteading organizations. HIPPY fits into its basic philosophy which espouses community-based, grass roots initiatives to promote the development of targeted low-income communities. The HIPPY program began in Brownswell in 1988. Data were collected in the second year the Brownswell program was in operation.

The Brownswell HIPPY program differed from the prescribed HIPPY model in one fundamental way: Due to lack of success in eliciting parent participation in group meetings during the first year of the program, the coordinator decided to hold these meetings only once a month, rather than twice a month as specified by the program model.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Data collection occurred in three phases. Throughout all three, fieldnotes were taken, site documents were collected, photographs of paraprofessionals, parents and the neighborhood were taken, and the program coordinator was interviewed regularly.

Paraprofessional meetings were observed once a week, and the monthly parent group meetings were observed throughout the entire year (from October 1989 through June 1990). Data collection provided only a partial view of the program since paraprofessional meetings often extended into a second day each week but were observed for only one day. Furthermore, the researcher did not participate in parent home visits. Therefore, the views of the program presented in this report reflect primarily the paraprofessionals' perspective.

In the first phase, the researcher focused on developing a rapport with the paraprofessionals. This was the most important and difficult phase because as a white, middle-class woman with no children she was very much of an outsider to the group. Her success at establishing rapport with the paraprofessionals was fundamental in understanding their point of view and in eliciting their participation in the data collection. The coordinator introduced the researcher to the paraprofessionals as the official "chronicler" of the program and explained that she would be observing the meetings in order to document how the program worked from their perspective—to tell others the inside story. The fact that the

coordinator was strongly interested in the study and its aims helped to win the paraprofessionals' initial acceptance of the researchers' presence in the group.

During this first phase, the researcher observed the paraprofessional meetings and took fieldnotes. Her data collection was open-ended and she kept notes thematically, with research questions emerging from her observations. During the second phase, the researcher developed, conducted, and audiotaped semi-structured interviews with each of the paraprofessionals to elicit information about their personal and job histories, as well as their experiences as paraprofessionals (Appendix B).

During the third phase, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with parents to ascertain their experience of the program (Appendix C). Initially the researcher hoped to establish rapport with the parents during the first few group meetings and then accompany the paraprofessionals on home visits to conduct interviews. However, because of the limited number of group meetings and the extremely low turnout for these events she was not able to get to know the parents. Parents were reluctant to grant interviews or have her present during home visits since she was virtually a stranger to them. Ultimately, she was able to conduct interviews with only five parents. Four interviews were conducted in parents' homes, and one interview was conducted at a local school where one paraprofessional and some of her parents met for a parenting class.

Although not necessarily representative, these were the only five parents who agreed to be interviewed during the three months when paraprofessional actively recruited parents for interviews. One parent only had a limited amount to say about HIPPY because her eighteen-year-old daughter was actually doing the program with her son.

Several factors may have led to the difficulty in gaining access to parents. First, the paraprofessionals themselves felt uncomfortable with being interviewed, and they may have sensed that parents in the program would feel the same. As a result, interviews were very difficult to schedule. At times, paraprofessionals seemed reluctant to help set up parent interviews. When interviews were scheduled, parents often changed their minds at the last minute and decided that they did not want to be interviewed. Another difficulty was that emergencies sometimes prevented parents from keeping appointments.

As a result of limited observations of HIPPY parents, this study focuses primarily on the experiences of the paraprofessionals. Data on the parents' experience in the program is largely drawn from second-hand accounts from the paraprofessionals about how their parents felt about the program and, to a lesser extent, from the limited sample of parents interviewed.

Data Analysis

Typically, data analysis is an on-going process in ethnographic research. The researcher regularly reviews the data collected to help determine new directions, questions, and areas of focus. In this study, while some data was analyzed during the data-collection period, most of it was analyzed after all the data had been collected. Moreover, since the program staff was available the following year, the researcher shared the findings with them and incorporated their feedback.

The following lists and describes the various steps and activities that took place:

1. Transcribing all initial interviews. This study did not begin with any specific research questions. Rather the researcher entered the setting with some general questions: How do program participants experience HIPPY? What do they perceive as its benefits? Why do they participate? Therefore, the initial interviews were transcribed in their entirety. The analysis at this stage served to begin to focus on specific themes and questions.

2. Finding salient themes. By reviewing the interview transcripts and the fieldnotes, the researcher identified several salient themes. Each new theme required reviewing all the data from beginning to end.

3. Writing periodic "Think Pieces." To help develop the different themes as they emerged from the data, the researcher periodically wrote "think pieces"—two-to-three-page descriptions of emerging themes, which she shared with her supervisor. These helped to focus the questioning and the observations.

4. Discussing findings with coordinator. Once emergent themes began to crystallize, the researcher discussed them with the program coordinator leading to a fuller understanding of the data but sometimes also leading to a complete change in direction.

5. Transcribing part of follow-up interviews. Once general themes were identified, the researcher reviewed additional audiotaped interviews and transcribed those portions that seemed particularly relevant.

6. Coding fieldnotes and interview transcripts. After finalizing the salient themes, the researcher developed codes and applied them to all fieldnotes and interview transcripts.

7. Receiving feedback from paraprofessionals. Once a revised draft of the report was complete, the paraprofessionals read it and gave the researcher feedback. Most of the comments from the paraprofessionals referred to descriptions of the setting and the program. They had fewer comments on the research findings.

Methodological References

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Wax, Rosalie H. *Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

FINDINGS

This section organizes the findings by themes. Each of the major codes used in the data analysis forms the unifying theme for each of the discussions below. The themes are then divided between those relating to parents and children and those relating to paraprofessionals.

The findings reported here represent the voices, opinions, and perceptions of the program coordinators, the paraprofessionals, and the parents.

Program Participants

The Coordinators

During the period of data collection, the HIPPY program in Brownswell had two coordinators.

Tanette Blackman was in her early thirties and had lived in Brownswell most of her life. A program manager and administrator of many programs, including HIPPY in Brownswell, Tanette was instrumental in encouraging the sponsoring organization to fund and develop a HIPPY program in Brownswell two years earlier. She viewed the program as a means of empowering the community and shaped the program around this goal. Group meeting topics focused on community issues, in which she encouraged the paraprofessionals and parents to become involved. Tanette worked closely with the paraprofessionals in a process-oriented fashion to develop leadership skills. She emphasized the importance of providing them with information and alternatives as to how they might handle problematic situations or plan a group meeting and then encouraged them to make their own decisions.

Tanette was soft-spoken but expressed herself with clarity and conviction about HIPPY and her vision of HIPPY as a vehicle for community empowerment. She had a natural and easy-going relationship with the paraprofessionals. Tanette was pregnant in the beginning of the program year and left on maternity leave midway through the year. Jean Jackson took her place as HIPPY program coordinator.

Jean Jackson was in her early thirties. She was a field coordinator at the sponsoring agency, responsible for funding, technical assistance, and planning for the community-based programs in one of the targeted neighborhoods. While lacked formal training as a HIPPY coordinator, she drew on her experience as a field coordinator to administer the program during Tanette's absence.

Jean's emphasis was on developing the paraprofessionals' sense of professionalism and providing them with career-guidance opportunities. Jean also worked with them to encourage greater parent participation at group meetings and other events. She continued Tanette's emphasis on involving parents and paraprofessionals in community issues.

The Paraprofessionals

The paraprofessionals were selected from a pool of parents interested in program participation. Tanette approached those parents she felt would be able to handle the job responsibly, could communicate well with other parents, and had a high level of interest in working with people.

There were seven paraprofessionals in the program, each responsible for seven to ten mothers. Two paraprofessionals dropped out within the first two months of the program. One left because she found another job; the other had family problems and could not continue. They were replaced by two new paraprofessionals, four months into the program year.

Two of the paraprofessionals, Janet Josephs and Jacky Davis, were in their second year as paraprofessionals and worked with the parents of the five-year-old children. Three paraprofessionals were married, although one was not living with her husband. All of the paraprofessionals were on public assistance. They ranged in age from 25 to 32. All but two of the paraprofessionals had lived in Brownswell most of their lives. All except one had completed high school, and some had started courses of further education.

Jacky Davis was 32 years old and had four children. She was warm and had a decisive take-charge attitude. Jacky had a gregarious personality and a commanding presence. Before HIPPY, Jacky had worked as a school crossing guard for three years. She also had worked as a volunteer aide at a day-care center for many years.

Jacky had the most seniority, not only because she was the oldest in the group, but also because she had been one of the first paraprofessionals in the Brownswell program. She was the Senior Paraprofessional to the coordinator, thereby responsible for overseeing the organization's paperwork, helping the coordinator screen parents for the program, and making periodic spot checks on parents to monitor their progress.

Tammy Howard was thirty years old, married and had four children. She was from a family of ten children. Before working as a paraprofessional she had been a home attendant to the mentally retarded for five years. She was friendly, soft-spoken, and dedicated to her work as a paraprofessional. She enjoyed people and handled her parents with a great deal of sensitivity. Tammy loved cooking and frequently brought home-made food to meetings and organized parties and luncheons for the paraprofessionals at her home. Occasionally she catered for church events and large family gatherings.

Tracy Edwards was 29 years old and had two children. She had attended a four-year community college for secretarial science but left when she became pregnant. Before becoming a paraprofessional, she had worked at several different jobs—as a worker in a clothing factory, a sales person in a department store, and a family day-care provider. Tracy was an outspoken member of the group with strong opinions, and she often voiced suggestions for different group activities. Despite an overall aggressive manner of speaking, she expressed care and concern about the program and the

other paraprofessionals. She was very conscientious about her role and responsibilities as a paraprofessional.

Janet Josephs was 25 years old and married. Janet had almost finished a six-month degree program in secretarial science but left when she became pregnant. Before becoming a HIPPY paraprofessional, Janet had mainly stayed at home to take care of her children, periodically working in temporary cashier and sales positions. After HIPPY, Janet said she wanted to work with computers as a word processor. Midway through the program year (her second year as a paraprofessional), she gave birth to her third child. Janet was often absent from meetings because of her pregnancy. However, she was very committed to her work as a paraprofessional and returned to work only two weeks after the birth of her child, carrying her baby in a bassinet. Janet had a good sense of humor and was always cheerful.

Lorraine George was 26 years old and had one child. Lorraine had grown up on a farm in the South and moved to Brownswell a few years earlier because she believed there would be more opportunities for her. Lorraine had started a four-year college degree when she was twenty but dropped out because she became pregnant. She had worked at several different sales and cashier jobs before becoming a paraprofessional; she wanted to go back to school to become a physical therapist. Somewhat shy and quiet in the beginning of the year, Lorraine later gained confidence and became one of the more vocal members of the group. She liked to be organized and was very conscientious about her work.

Roxanne McCrae was 31 years old with three children. She was married but did not live with her husband. Roxanne had worked in a sewing factory for five years but left that job to stay home with her three young children. Although she lacked a high school diploma, Roxanne had completed a six-month degree program in secretarial science and planned on getting her GED. After finishing HIPPY, she wanted to work as a word processor. Roxanne began working as a paraprofessional late in the year, replacing one of the paraprofessionals who had dropped out. Like Lorraine, she was somewhat shy at first but gradually gained confidence in her abilities as a paraprofessional and as a member of the group.

Wanda Norriss was 29 years old and had two daughters. Wanda had been a family day-care provider for five years before working as a paraprofessional. She had completed six months of a two-year degree program in child development but left the program because she wanted to work. Wanda aspired to be a first-grade teacher. She replaced the other paraprofessional who had dropped out and, like Roxanne, got a late start in the program. Quiet and soft-spoken, she loved working with children and also often talked about how much fun she had working with her parents. Wanda was a great dancer and sometimes entertained the group with her dancing.

Gloria Spooner was 34 years old and had one son. Gloria was a volunteer with the HIPPY program. She made significant contributions throughout the year, providing child care during the group meetings and helping the paraprofessionals organize HIPPY group meetings and events. She and Jacky Davis were sisters. Gloria occasionally attended the paraprofessional meetings and was a well-liked member of the group. The paraprofessionals appreciated her sense of humor and her willingness to help out. She was a superb face painter and organized face-painting activities for the HIPPY children at several events.

The Parents

Parents were recruited at a parents' meeting held at the beginning of the school year at a local day care center. The coordinator informed parents about the program and invited them to join. The second-year paraprofessionals also participated in the recruitment effort by posting signs around the neighborhood in day-care centers, elementary schools, churches, and community centers and by canvassing door-to-door. The paraprofessionals were also responsible for recruiting new parents during the year to replace those who had dropped out.

When parents expressed interest in participating in the program, Tanette and her assistant, Jacky, made home visits to explain in more detail the goals and activities of the program and assess the parents' readiness to commit to participation in HIPPY.

A total of 100 families were enrolled in the HIPPY program at the beginning of the second year the program was in operation. During the initial recruitment drive, over 130 parents expressed interest in receiving further information, and sixty new parents and their four-year-old children ultimately enrolled in the program. Forty of the fifty-five parents who had participated in the first program year completed the age-four curriculum and returned to continue in the second program year with the age-five curriculum.

The HIPPY parents were mainly single mothers in their 20's and 30's. There were also two grandmothers, an aunt, a foster mother, and one father. Most of the parents were on some form of public assistance. About half worked in either part- or full-time employment, and others were in job or educational training programs related to their public assistance benefits. Some parents were actively involved such community affairs as their church, tenants' association, and Parent-Teacher Association. Except one mother who was Brazilian, all program participants were African-American

Program Participation

About thirty of the 100 parents who initially enrolled in the program, dropped out over the course of the year. When parents dropped out, the paraprofessionals recruited new parents to replace them. In addition, twelve new parents were recruited in January, through a Board of Education program at a local school that provided GED preparation and support for parents of preschoolers. The Board of Education provided some of the funding necessary to enroll some parents from its program into the HIPPY program. By the end of the year, a total of 86 parent-child pairs completed the thirty-week cycle; sixty finished the age four-curriculum, and 26 five-year-olds graduated from HIPPY after concluding their second program cycle.

The majority of parents who dropped out did so within the first few weeks of the program year. A major reason for attrition in the very beginning was parents' misunderstanding of the program. Although parents were initially interviewed by the coordinator to determine their ability to handle the program, a few paraprofessionals felt that their parents had not been adequately screened. The paraprofessionals stated that when they made their first home visits, many parents did not seem to understand what the program was about nor realize the degree of commitment involved. For instance, some parents did not realize that the paraprofessionals would be visiting their homes and did not feel comfortable

with this. Other parents thought that the paraprofessionals would be tutoring their child and were hesitant or nervous about being required to teach themselves. Some felt insulted by their misperception that the paraprofessional, a peer to them, was teaching them how to read. One paraprofessional described how she went to great lengths to assure parents initially that she was not there to teach them how to read but rather to teach them techniques for teaching their children.

Perhaps because they had not been adequately screened, some parents certainly were not prepared for the paraprofessional's first home visit. The paraprofessionals reported that some parents refused to open their doors to them initially, because they feared the paraprofessionals were from the Bureau of Child Welfare (BCW) or were social workers checking up on them. Tammy described visiting one parent living with her cousin who was being investigated by the BCW, who refused to believe that Tammy was not from the BCW and would not speak to her.

Clearly, an important factor in early attrition was parents' misperceptions and lack of knowledge about what to expect from the program. Tanette said that fewer parents dropped out of the program during the second year than during the first. She believed this was because more parents in the community knew about HIPPY and what the program involved. Tanette said,

> I think the paraprofessionals have been better able to get across the message this year that HIPPY is structured and is a commitment. Also, people who joined this year heard about HIPPY through their friends and word-of-mouth so they knew better what to expect.

Several paraprofessionals agreed that those parents who had been referred to them by word-of-mouth were among their best parents because they knew what the program involved and had actively sought participation in the program themselves.

Programmatic Implication*

Parents need a clear understanding of the program at the outset. *The significant amount of parent attrition occurred in the first few weeks of the program. Some of it was unavoidable, such as that resulting from personal or family crises or relocation. Much of the dropping out, however, resulted from parents' misunderstanding of the program. The fact that some parents thought the paraprofessionals would be tutoring their children, while others were surprised to learn that home visits were an essential feature of the program, suggests that the program had not been adequately explained during the screening process.*

Parent Involvement

Many paraprofessionals described how enthusiastic parents were about HIPPY. For instance, Jacky said, "When I first began HIPPY, a lot of people thought I was a social worker and wouldn't let me in the door. Now they all say, 'Hurry up inside, Jacky, I was waiting for you!' "

Jacky also described how one of her parents, Janine, would come to her house to pick up the materials if Jacky couldn't make a home visit that week. When Janine went on vacation, she took the HIPPY materials with her. Apparently Janine worked consistently in the program for two years. Tammy described how one of her mothers was always outside waiting for Tammy whenever she made her home visits, even in the winter.

Interviews with the paraprofessionals and five participating parents indicated that some parents enjoyed the process of role-playing and were enthusiastic about the HIPPY materials. Tracy described how one of her mothers seemed to enjoy HIPPY even more than her child. She said that this mother always laughed and giggled during the role-playing and would eagerly ask if Tracy was coming back the next week. Lorraine also described how one of her mothers frequently exclaimed about how much she and her child loved the HIPPY shapes and materials. Wanda commented on how her mothers loved being involved with the program and how much fun they had role-playing with her and their children. She noted that when children see their mothers having fun, it helps them to realize that learning can be fun.

Parents' Commitment Despite Obstacles

Participation in the HIPPY program required a substantial commitment on the part of parents. Each was required to spend at least fifteen to twenty minutes a day with the child working on the HIPPY materials, meet with their paraprofessional once a week, and attend group meetings. Finding the time and space to do HIPPY on a regular basis presented a challenge to HIPPY parents. Also, many faced considerable social and economic hardships that posed obstacles to their continual program participation. The kinds of problems that hindered the HIPPY mothers from continuing in the program included lack of child care, health problems, over-crowded homes, deteriorating housing, drug and alcohol problems, spouse and child abuse, depression, and reliance on a bureaucratic welfare system. Despite these problems, the parents in the HIPPY program demonstrated extraordinary motivation to continue. For instance, one mother worked two eight-hour shifts a day, five days a week, because her husband had recently left her and she had no other way to support her four children. Yet this mother consistently made time to do HIPPY with her child every day. Tammy, who worked with this mother said, "She takes her daughter from day care early so she can have a little time with her before she goes to work. She finds a way—she makes time for HIPPY."

One paraprofessional noted that a common obstacle for parents was finding a private space and time to do HIPPY. She explained that many parents live with their extended families and are constantly besieged by the demands of their children and other family members. She said,

> Sometimes when you visit, you can't sit down with a mother because everybody is saying every three minutes, "Gimme, gimme, gimme," and it gets kind of awkward. I say, "Is there somewhere else we can go or some other time we can do this because we can't hear ourselves think." Sometimes we just go into the bedroom and close the door, or say, "Everyone out of the room."

One mother was practically illiterate but insisted on working with her child on HIPPY, rather than having other family

*The purpose of this study is to describe one setting in rich contextualized detail, not to provide generalizable findings. A similar study conducted with a different program might lead to different findings. Still, the findings of this study have several programmatic implications, noted throughout this report, that may be generalizable to other HIPPY programs. Some of them may also be relevant to other home-based, family support programs.

members with better reading skills teach her child. This woman's mother and her eldest daughter helped her with the materials, and the pictures also aided her in following the materials. Tammy described what motivated this mother: "She wants to learn how to deal with her child herself and not always have someone else running interference for her. She wants to be the one to teach her son."

Interestingly, the parents and paraprofessionals had no negative comments to make about the parents' involvement with their children at home. Such criticisms were made only when describing and explaining lack of parent participation in the group meetings. It is possible that because group meetings were not emphasized as a core component of the program model, the participants did not place much importance on them; they may have felt that the home visits formed the core of the program and therefore may have felt less comfortable sharing negative experiences or opinions about them.

Adaptability to Parents' Needs

Both parents and paraprofessionals indicated that one of the primary reasons that some parents were able to maintain their involvement in the program despite busy schedules and serious personal problems was the program's adaptability to the needs of parents.

The structure of HIPPY is inherently flexible and adaptive to parents' needs. Home visits enabled parents to participate in the program without requiring the special effort and organization necessary to attend activities outside the home. Given the child-care problems and the many demands on these parents' time and attention, this factor was probably crucial to their ongoing involvement in the program.

Also, HIPPY is designed to fit into the parents' schedule. Home visits can be rescheduled if emergencies arise, and parents can work with their child on HIPPY whenever it is convenient for them. Two of the parents interviewed mentioned this flexibility as being one of the aspects they liked best about the program. Also the program requires parents to work with their child just fifteen minutes a day, so that involvement is on a regular but manageable level.

An important part of keeping parents involved is understanding the difficulties parents and children sometimes have in keeping up with the weekly activities and helping them to catch up later when they feel able to become reinvolved. Tanette felt that it was important to try to keep parents in the program even if crises or personal problems prevented them from following all the program requirements. She said,

> If a parent has a crisis, we allow her to skip a week if necessary. The program is flexible. I stress that even if a mother has a crisis, we'll still be there for her, and she can still get something out of the program. As long as a mother is functioning in HIPPY, we try to keep her in the program.

Tanette stressed the importance of the program philosophy—that HIPPY should be fun rather than a chore and that parents and children should feel motivated to do the work. She believed that HIPPY should be enjoyable and fit into the routines and needs of parents.

The paraprofessionals modeled their approach to working with parents on this philosophy. Tammy described how she handled parents who had difficulties keeping up with the work in this way:

> When parents become discouraged, I tell them that even if they have a problem and they may not feel like working on HIPPY that day, they can continue to work on it in a couple of days when the problem gets solved. Then when I go back to them, a lot of times they feel better about the program. When my own child doesn't feel like doing HIPPY, I tell her she doesn't have to do it that day. Then the next day, she'll come to me with the HIPPY materials, saying she really wants to do it.

In order to keep parents involved in the program, it was sometimes necessary for paraprofessionals to provide support and understanding to parents in crisis. Lorraine put in this way, "A lot of times, listening to parents' problems helps to keep them in the program, because if they can't solve their problem, they will drop out."

However, sometimes lending a sympathetic ear was not enough. If a parent had a problem that required professional help, the paraprofessional, with the coordinator's guidance, would inform that parent about a relevant social service agency in the community.

Sometimes the paraprofessionals had to go out of their way to adapt to parents needs. For instance, one mother was being abused by her husband. Rather than take her paraprofessional's suggestion to contact a women's shelter, she decided to move into her aunt's house. The group discussed how safe it would be for the paraprofessional to continue to work with this mother and decided that she would not be endangered as long as she was visiting her at the aunt's home.

Sometimes Tanette's flexible approach and her desire to bend program requirements to include as many parents as possible created problems. For instance, Tanette permitted parents to start HIPPY very late in the program year to replace others who had dropped out. Some parents began more than half way through the program year. As a result, paraprofessionals had to organize materials for parents who were all on different weeks, and both parents and paraprofessionals had to rush through two or three weeks of materials each week in order to catch up. Also, she allowed parents of five-year-olds who were new to the HIPPY program to start HIPPY with the four-year-old program using materials not always appropriate for these older children.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of Tanette's approach was that she did not require parents to attend group meetings and she scheduled them infrequently rather than twice monthly as required by the program model. She felt that it was too hard to get parents to attend these meetings and that they would drop out if program participation depended on attending them.

Programmatic Implications

Home visits should be flexible. *Structuring the delivery of services around individualized instruction in the home was crucial to the program's adaptability to parents' needs and its success in attracting and retaining parents. Home visits created a great deal of flexibility for parents because they could fit them into their own schedules and did not have to make complicated child-care arrangements. The fact that parents received individualized instruction from their paraprofessional made it possible to adjust the pace of learning according to each one's level of ability. When parents experienced a crisis, they could fall behind schedule and catch up in later weeks, or they could reschedule an appointment. This adaptability of the program was crucial in enabling parents with multiple problems to con-*

tinue, despite sometimes severe obstacles to their participation.

On-going recruitment needs to be examined carefully. *Recruiting new parents into the program to replace those who had dropped out enabled the paraprofessionals to maintain their work hours. It also made it possible for parents who later became interested in the program to participate. However, this on-going recruitment created clerical and organizational difficulties for paraprofessionals who had to photocopy and supply different materials for parents working on different weeks of the program. Moreover, when parents started the program late, they were encouraged to catch up by doubling up on the lessons. It was probably not realistic to expect parents and children to move through the materials this quickly.*

*Benefits to Parents**

Increased Parent–Child Interaction

One benefit of program participation that parents interviewed talked about most was that HIPPY served as a vehicle for increasing their involvement with their children. Tanette commented, "The increased mother–child interaction has been the brightest star of the program."

All the parents interviewed talked about how HIPPY had improved their relationship with their children in one way or another. One mother said,

> I think the program not only helps the child, but it also helps the parent. It really teaches you how to communicate with your child. It's easier to talk to my child now, 'cause I can sit down and show him things from the lesson—like how to color, and cut and paste.

Another mother said,

> Our relationship is a lot better now. I'm a loner and like to be by myself. Before HIPPY, my son would do his homework, and then I would send him to his room, saying, "Let mommy think." Now I look forward to doing HIPPY with him. HIPPY brings us closer together.

One mother gave a moving account of how HIPPY had brought her closer to her son because the activities had taught her how much fun it was to play and interact with him and how much her son valued her involvement. She said,

> My son and I have gotten closer, as far as playing goes. I always used to be very serious. My son always used to say, "Mommy, I want to play. Mommy, I want to do this. Mommy always wants to sit down and be serious." But then when we got up to that book where we had to crawl on the floor and act like a sheep—that was funny to me. From that book on, we've been acting out different things and playing together.
>
> The program has helped me participate more with the children, because I always used to say, "children are supposed to play with children, not grown-ups." HIPPY has made me want to play with them more. A lot of games and activities I wouldn't have wanted to participate in the past, I will now. Now I have a yard full of kids every day playing Simon Says or other games.

One paraprofessional commented that better parent-child communication was one of the best things to come out of the program:

> A lot of my parents say they have a better relationship with their child now, because with HIPPY, they're spending a lot of one-on-one time with their kids. This is a good thing because what we need in this community now is to help parents have a better relationship with their kids. There's so much bad stuff going on around here—this program has done a really wonderful thing for parents, because now at least they are learning how to communicate with their children.

Parents as Teachers

The HIPPY lesson plans are designed to enable parents to be successful in teaching their children. The fact that parents teach their children themselves helps them to feel effective in their parenting role. The materials are accessible to parents, even those with little formal schooling because they are logical and simple to follow. The materials are designed to elicit constant feedback between parent and child so that parents receive immediate confirmation that the child is learning and progressing. Parents find the material satisfying because they can see the child learning and can see the role they are playing in helping the child learn.

The many comments that parents made in their interviews about how much more involved they felt with their children and how much their children were learning through HIPPY indicate that these parents felt good about their role as teacher.

One mother said that she had helped her child become more motivated to learn through HIPPY because she was actively involved in her child's learning process. She said,

> I think my child gets more out of HIPPY than from his pre-school because I'm more involved. I'm taking more time out with him, and he learns better because he's learning from his mother. In school he didn't want to learn the work. Now that I am helping him, he wants to get more involved. He goes and gets the shapes and the crayons and the books and wants me to work on them with him.

Another mother spoke with excitement about observing how her child transferred skills she was learning through HIPPY to the world around her. She said,

> My daughter uses the problem-solving skills she is learning in HIPPY. Like, if we're watching TV, and there's a problem you have to figure out before they give you the answer, she'll do it. Also, when I'm walking down the street with her and I tell her what the word on a sign means, the next time we pass by it, she'll know the word.

It was evident that the parents interviewed enjoyed the HIPPY materials and the process of teaching their children. One mother filed all the weekly activity packets and the work her son had done in different folders, so that she could back over the material with him during the summer.

Some parents challenged themselves and their children by creatively extending the activities. One mother said,

> Sometimes we make up little games from the program material. For instance, if I have to draw a line from a picture of a boy to a house, I'll say, "Well, who knows

*The findings reported here are based on interviews with five parents, the paraprofessionals, and the two coordinators.

which way John is walking? Is it to the left, or to the right?"

Another mother spoke about how HIPPY had helped not only her child but herself to become more disciplined:

> HIPPY is like a chore in that a person has to do a chore every day—it's like a commitment. It's helped me to break out of a certain pattern, where I would do things randomly, without a plan. Now I know that I will devote a certain time every day to my child and not let anything else interfere.

Social Support

Through weekly one-on-one contacts, the paraprofessionals reported they were becoming a source of social support to their parents. The trust built between parents and paraprofessionals seemed to be critical to the program in Brownswell.

The home visits provided a forum for some of the parents and paraprofessionals to become friends. The latter said they had to build rapport and trust with their parents so that the parents would feel comfortable enough to allow them into their homes each week to teach them to use the HIPPY materials.

As instructed, the paraprofessionals asked each of their parents a series of questions at the beginning of every home visit. The questions were designed to open up conversation between the parent and the paraprofessional and to encourage the parent to talk about the progress he/she and the child had made that week and any difficulties that had arisen. Paraprofessionals reported that these conversations often moved from the topic of HIPPY into discussions of problems that parents were experiencing in other areas of their lives. For instance, Tracy noted that, while many of her parents did not respond immediately when asked about their week, often, after the role-playing was through, they would open up and tell her about what had been happening to them.

The fact that the paraprofessionals were also peers and neighbors appeared crucial to their ability to understand and help parents with the problems they faced. Tanette commented on the importance of the peer network that had developed between parents and paraprofessionals:

> It's very important that paraprofessionals help parents as peers because they see and understand their problems best. I think this peer network is one of the most important things to come out of this program.

Having paraprofessionals as peers and neighbors also made parents feel that their paraprofessionals were accessible for help because of their physical and social proximity. One parent said,

> My paraprofessional asks me throughout the week, "Are you having any problems? Do you need any help? If you do, just let me know and I'll come down and help you." She's really a good person to know.

Another parent described her appreciation of her paraprofessional's supportiveness and willingness to extend herself beyond the weekly home visits in this way: "Tammy is a really open person. She always says, even if it's not my day, 'If you need help with any thing just come over. I'm right next door.' "

For some parents, having their paraprofessional visit them every week and take an active interest in their lives provided a valuable relief from the sense of isolation they felt. One parent spoke about how important her paraprofessional, who was also her neighbor, had become in her life:

> We've grown closer, like friends. I used to sit outside and I didn't really communicate with anyone. My paraprofessional would come down and talk to me about the work and about leisure things. If I had a problem, she would help me.

Some parents came to see their paraprofessional as a confidante. Lorraine described how one of her parents confided to her certain things she could not tell her family:

> The parents really trust you. They open up and tell you things they wouldn't normally tell others. I have a parent whose always telling me what's on her mind. She couldn't even talk to her family, and now she'll open up and talk to me. You know, sometimes you just need to talk to someone.

Lorraine hypothesized that parents confided in their paraprofessionals because they perceived them as a kind of neutral sounding board for their problems. The paraprofessionals were interested and willing to listen but were not directly involved in the parents' lives.

As coordinator, Tanette insisted that the paraprofessionals should not see themselves as social workers, nor feel compelled to resolve parents problems not related to HIPPY. However, paraprofessionals were encouraged to listen to parents and remain sensitive to problems that might be interfering with their ability to do HIPPY. Tanette stressed that, given the opportunity to talk through a problem, parents were often able to arrive at their own solutions.

Tammy described how she had helped one mother see herself as the person best able to make decisions about her own personal problems:

> One of my mothers had a problem with her husband and everyone was giving her advice. She didn't know what to do. She asked me what I would do in her situation, since I was married too. I told her that I couldn't tell her what to do because it wasn't my situation and that she would have to make up her own mind. No one else could make that decision for her. Everyone was telling her what she should do, so it made her feel good that I was telling her that it was up to her. When I left she felt better about the situation. I tell my parents that if they want to tell me something I'm there to listen, but I can't tell them what to do. It's up to them.

The paraprofessionals also acted as role models for parents, by exploring with them different ways of dealing with a problem and persuading them that they could make changes in their lives. Tanette believed that parents would grow and develop through their relationship with their paraprofessional. Therefore, she focused on developing leadership and problem-solving skills in the paraprofessionals, who she believed would then act as role models for their parents.

When Tanette was asked whether she thought the paraprofessionals *were* serving as models for the parents, she said she had noticed many positive signs:

> The paraprofessionals have become good role models. They have learned to verbalize issues a lot more to their parents. The paraprofessionals have begun talking to their parents about going to school and speaking up to their children's teachers. For instance, Tracy spoke to one mother whose child was having a problem with a teacher in school. She encouraged this woman to speak up and talk to the principal. This woman ended up speaking to other mothers about this teacher. She discovered other parents had also been having problems, so they all

went and spoke to the principal. This mother apparently used the same techniques to talk to the other mothers, as we had used in our discussions with her.

Tanette also described how Jacky had persuaded one mother, who always stayed in with her kids, to come out for the evening with her. Tanette commented, "For this mother, it was really liberating for her, because Jacky helped her realize that it was OK to take time out for herself."

Informational Support

The paraprofessionals also advised parents who were dealing with serious problems how and where to seek additional information or professional help. Tammy said that she had referred eight of her parents, all of whom were on public assistance and were unemployed, to a free local adult education training program. All eight parents subsequently enrolled in the program. One mother needed a larger apartment after the birth of her child. Lorraine was able to assist her in applying for and receiving a subsidized apartment with more space.

Parents did not always make use of the information the paraprofessionals provided; however, this support was important in enabling parents to develop an awareness of the options available to them in the community. Tanette told this story concerning one paraprofessional with a parent who had a serious drug problem:

> A mother of Tammy's was involved with drugs. At first, Tammy said she didn't know what to say to this woman. But then we discussed it as a group and developed some options this woman could try, like entering a drug program. While this woman didn't end up entering a program, she said she appreciated having Tammy open up these new avenues to her and the fact that Tammy had been there to listen.

Information-oriented group meetings were also a way of providing parents with information on issues and problems relevant to their lives. However, since parents rarely attended these meetings, they mainly gained access to this information through their paraprofessionals.

After one group meeting on lead poisoning, the paraprofessionals distributed informational leaflets on the topic to their parents, including a city-wide hotline number parents could call to register lead-poison complaints. They also gave support to those parents who suspected they might have a problem, encouraging them to talk to their landlords and organize tenants in their building around this issue. Tammy worked with a mother whose three children had been hospitalized for lead poisoning. The support that Tammy was able to provide this mother had a dramatic and positive outcome, which will be described in a later section.

Support from Family Members

In some cases, HIPPY provided a vehicle for other family members to become involved with teaching the child. Some mothers reported significant support from fathers and other family members. One mother said that when she was not available to do HIPPY, her son would ask his older brother, his father, or his grandparents to help him out with his "homework." She said,

> The HIPPY program has changed the family as a whole because my husband participates in it too. He didn't want to participate at first, because he believed that the mother is supposed to help the child with homework. But then when he saw what the booklets were like, he started to help out also.

Three mothers in the program with poor reading skills received assistance with the lessons from other family members. Another mother worked in the evenings and had her elder daughter teach her son the HIPPY materials.

Although only one father was officially a HIPPY parent, other fathers also participated in the program. Two paraprofessionals said that they knew families where the husband would work with the child when the mother was not available. Another paraprofessional said that when one mother couldn't attend a group meeting she would sometimes send her husband.

Tammy observed a father who started to participate during a home visit. Describing the excitement of the child, she said, "When his father started reading him the story, you could see the child's face light up."

Benefits to Children

The Fun of Learning

The HIPPY curriculum is designed to show children that learning can be fun. The materials are varied to hold children's interest and attention and often involve game-like activities to engage the child in the process of learning as a form of play.

Parents interviewed frequently spoke of how much their children enjoyed HIPPY and how motivated they were to do the work. Paraprofessionals told about children waiting at the door to receive the new HIPPY materials. Parents reported that their children were eagerly demanding to work on HIPPY. One mother said her child would wake up late at night and ask her to get out the HIPPY materials. Some parents complained to the paraprofessionals that there was often not enough weekly materials and that their children would finish the week's activities within the first few days.

It appears that some parents and children enjoyed the work so much that they voluntarily completed the week's work in a few sittings. Tanette explained that she told the paraprofessionals that trying to complete the work in one sitting was not appropriate or necessary. But, clearly, some parents and children did it anyway.

One mother described what her son liked about HIPPY in this way: "My son likes the fact that every day there's something different to do. One day he does the dot-to-dot, the next day we color pictures, and the next day we read a storybook." Tracy described how one boy took his HIPPY books wherever he went. She said, "He was even carrying his HIPPY books in a little plastic bag at the graduation!"

What Children Learn

The most frequently mentioned skills that parents and paraprofessionals said their children acquired from HIPPY were problem-solving, vocabulary, the ability to cut and paste, knowledge of shapes and colors, and learning how to follow directions.

One mother talked about how much she felt her son had learned so far:

> My son will use certain words now that he wouldn't use before. For instance, *same* and *different*. He's really developing his vocabulary. He's learning the definition of words and how to tell the story through the pictures in the book. He's also learning sizes and colors—he's learned a lot so far.

Tanette observed, "When HIPPY kids get into kindergarten, teachers notice that this must be a HIPPY child, because they can think more analytically."

Parents also felt that their children were being well-prepared for school. One mother said, "A lot of times children go to kindergarten and they're not prepared because they haven't learned enough in pre-school. But HIPPY puts them up to par." This same mother felt the HIPPY materials were more challenging than what her son was using in pre-school and reported that her son preferred the HIPPY work to his schoolwork.

Another mother said that at the last parent–teacher meeting at her son's pre-school, the teacher had told her that her son was more advanced than the other children and had wanted to put him in kindergarten.

Tammy spoke about how HIPPY had helped to build feelings of self-esteem and confidence in her daughter, who had been very shy and fearful:

> My daughter used to have very low self-esteem and always thought she couldn't do anything. In school, if they asked her to do something she would start to cry. But with this HIPPY work, she has improved so much. Even the teachers tell me it builds up her confidence. Now I just put the work in front of her and she knows what to do. It has really built her up. She gets very good report cards all the time now. Now she says, "Oh, I can do that." She needed something to build her up, and the HIPPY work really did it!

*Parent Participation in HIPPY Events**

The purpose of the group meetings is to draw parents together every other week to role play the HIPPY lessons and to engage in an enrichment activity chosen by the parents and coordinator. Group meetings are considered a crucial component of the HIPPY model because they to enable parents to receive support and guidance from the coordinator and create a forum in which parents can share their problems and reactions and learn from the experiances of others. By coming together regularly to discuss HIPPY and other issues of common interest, parents have the opportunity to form a support group through which they can begin to feel empowered.

In Brownswell, only six group meetings were held throughout the program year; and attendance at most of these meetings, as well as a few other events organized for parents, was very low. As a result, parents did not form a support group nor become involved in community issues raised at the meetings, as the paraprofessionals did.

Divergent Structure

Perhaps the most obvious reason for the lack of parent participation in group meetings was that meetings were very infrequent and were not a required part of program participation in Brownswell, in contrast to the program model.

In the HIPPY model, group meetings are held every other week in lieu of a home visit. Parents must attend these meetings in order to receive that week's activity packet and to role play the material. In addition, when parents role play, the coordinator has the opportunity to monitor progress. However, Tanette believed that this aspect of the HIPPY model could not work in Brownswell because parent attendance at group meetings in the previous year had been very low and as a result many parents had not received the material. She felt requiring group meetings as a condition of program participation, would jeopardize parent involvement in the program as a whole. Because of her past experience, Tanette scheduled group meetings only once a month and conducted home visits every week. She also changed the format of the group meetings, and role-playing was conducted in only three of them. By decreasing the frequency of group meetings and making them an optional part of program participation, Tanette may have reduced the likelihood of parent participation to a considerable extent.

Topic-Centered Meetings Unpopular

Group meetings and entertainment-oriented events that involved both parents and children were more successful at drawing parents out than were meetings intended to provide parents with information.

Four of the six group meetings were presentations on topics thought to be relevant to the community or parents' needs. They included presentations on lead poisoning, landlord–tenant issues, sickle-cell anemia, and an international sponsor-a-child program. These informational meetings had extremely low parent turnout. Three parents attended the lead-poisoning meeting, one parent attended the landlord-tenant meeting, no parents attended the sickle-cell anemia presentation, and about five parents attended the sponsor-a-child meeting. Despite the fact that Tanette often reminded and encouraged the paraprofessionals to invite parents to the monthly city-sponsored meetings on lead poisoning, no parent ever attended.

Several paraprofessionals said that one of the most frustrating aspects of the HIPPY job was trying to motivate parents to come out to group meetings and that parents would often express interest but then would not attend. For instance, a few paraprofessionals said that their parents had been particularly interested in the landlord-tenant group meeting, but only one parent actually attended. One paraprofessional said, "My mothers will talk about it [the issue of lead poisoning], but they won't come out [to the city lead-poisoning meetings]."

A notable exception to the general lack of participation in information-oriented events occurred when parents were invited to attend a community forum sponsored by several community agencies, which featured the Mayor as a keynote speaker. A variety of community social-service agency repre-

*Much of the following discussion grows out of speculation based on what the coordinator and paraprofessionals had to say about the lack of parent participation, rather than on what the parents themselves had to say. The researcher's ability to understand the dynamics of parent participation through direct observation and interviewing was limited by the parents' absence from group meetings, which would have been a natural forum to meet and become acquainted. Only five interviews with parents were conducted, and because the researcher was a stranger to these parents, it is unlikely she received candid responses.

sentatives were present at booths to distribute information and talk to residents about their services. While only two HIPPY parents attended this community forum, they brought other parents from their tenants' association. These parents commented on how valuable they had found the experience and reported that they had been able to distribute the information they had gathered to other parents in their tenants' association. This result suggests the potential of this type of event for educating parents.

A relatively high proportion of parents attended the other two group meetings, which were holiday parties to which parents and their children were invited. The first was a Halloween party with about fifteen parents in attendance, and the second was a Christmas party with a turnout of about sixty parents. Two other child-focused events were also popular among parents, the circus and a very popular Easter show. The event with the highest parent turnout was the end-of-year graduation, a gala affair with lots of food and entertainment provided by a professional African dance troupe. Almost all of the parents attended.

Tanette herself acknowledged that parents were more likely to come to entertainment events than to other types of meetings. She said,

> Unless you have a special event like a party, parents won't come out. A lot of mothers are not meeting-oriented. They are more likely to be drawn to large group activities rather than meetings.

The paraprofessionals voiced a similar, although slightly more cynical view of why parents did not attend group meetings. The paraprofessionals believed that parents were lazy and would only come out to meetings if they were offered food, presents, or some kind of entertainment. Some of their comments follow:

> It's kind of sad, but if we're giving away something, the parents will be there. Just like at the Christmas party, you saw how many people showed up. It's a shame you have to give stuff away to people to get them to come out.

> Parents are just lazy. They'd rather watch the soap operas than come out to the group meetings.

> Parents will only participate if you are doing fun things or events. When we went on those trips, like going to the circus, everybody wanted to come. As long as you're giving something away they say, "I want to go" or "When are you getting tickets to something?"

> A lot of parents who really need the information we dig up for them, still don't come to the group meetings.

> I spend extra time I don't get paid for seeking out information and helping my parents, and then I don't get the consideration of their coming out to the meetings. I don't have any problems with my parents, except getting them to come out to the group meetings.

The underlying assumption expressed by the paraprofessionals was that parents were only motivated to attend meetings when they perceived they would get something out of them. The problem was to help parents understand that what they could get from group meetings in addition to food, fun, and entertainment was a source of friendship and support in dealing with their problems.

Planning a greater number of entertainment or social events is probably an important strategy for motivating parents to participate initially. As parents become familiar with one another, a sense of group trust and solidarity may grow, which would lay the foundation for greater parent involvement in all types of group meetings. The two group meetings that had large parent turnouts were evidently not sufficient to begin to establish any sense of group cohesion.

Another factor for poor parent attendance at informational meetings may have been that these meetings concerned issues that were frightening realities to many parents, ones that they may have been denying or avoiding in their own lives. Without a sense of solidarity or friendship with other parents that might help them deal with these issues on a personal level, parents were even less likely to want to come to meetings to receive information about them.

Also, Tanette believed that parents were less likely to come to presentation-style meetings because "even if parents are concerned about the issue [in this case lead poisoning], they don't trust anyone from an agency to tell them anything, and they don't really distinguish between people from the city agencies and the presenters we get from community organizations."

Parents Not Involved in Planning

In the beginning of the year, Tanette gave the paraprofessionals a questionnaire to distribute to their parents, asking them to check off from a list of group meeting topics and activities those they would be most interested in. The suggested topics included AIDS, child abuse, sex education, spouse abuse, drug & alcohol abuse, nutrition, and parent education. The activities included crocheting, sewing, and making holiday ornaments. Parents were also asked to list other topics or activities of interest. The most popular topics and activities among parents surveyed were child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, sewing, and making holiday ornaments. No group meetings were planned around any of these topics (although parents were invited to participate in a community forum on child abuse). In fact, the only topic mentioned on the questionnaire that became a topic for a group meeting was landlord–tenant issues, which many of the paraprofessionals had identified as being an important topic.

Parents Not Always Informed

Interviews with the parents revealed that some paraprofessionals were not consistent about notifying their parents about group meetings. The paraprofessionals admitted that they occasionally forgot to tell parents about group meetings or the city lead-poisoning meetings. Forgetting to inform parents about group meetings was perhaps a reflection of the lack of emphasis placed on group meetings as an essential part of the program, as well as of the frustration that paraprofessionals felt about getting parents to participate

Parents' Perception of the Program

Another reason for low parent participation at group meetings may have been that parents essentially perceived the program as being for their children and did not understand that it was also intended to support them. This perception was probably reinforced by the fact that group meetings were not made an essential part of program participation and were held so infrequently.

As has been noted previously, meetings and events with the highest parent turnout were also those that involved both

parents and children. At the Halloween and Christmas parties parents mostly watched their children play rather than interacting with one another. Some parents simply dropped their children off and then picked them up again at the end of the party, perhaps because they saw these parties as events solely for their children or as opportunities to take a break from their youngsters. One parent expressed this view directly. When asked what she thought of the group meetings, she said, "I don't think I should have to go unless it's pertaining to my child . . . anything dealing with my child and I'm going to be there." This same parent said she was not interested in going to the group meetings in order to meet other parents. Two of the five parents interviewed mentioned that they would like to have a meeting in which their children presented what they had learned in HIPPY. These parents also evidently were interested in group meetings that focused on their children.

Graduation—A Special Case

Undoubtedly the strongest testimonial to parents' willingness to attend children-centered events was the graduation, called the "HIPPY Family Day Celebration." Tanette believed almost all the parents attended. The focal event was the awards ceremony at which HIPPY parents and children were presented with certificates of achievement before an audience of over 200 family members and friends. Elsa Brown, a well-known parent advocate and community activist, was the keynote speaker. She gave a rousing, emotional speech about the importance of Black pride and self-esteem, which the parents received with enthusiasm.

The children then assembled on the stage for a dance workshop, in which the members of a professional African dance company taught the children dances to the beat of African drums. The children later performed the dance steps they had learned for the audience of family and friends.

The high parent turnout for this event may have resulted from the paraprofessionals' enthusiasm about the graduation and their commitment to making it a success. With the help of the coordinators, the paraprofessionals and the volunteer, Gloria, spent a part of every paraprofessional meeting for a few months prior to the graduation brainstorming ideas and making arrangements. Because the paraprofessionals felt highly committed to in this event, they may have communicated their excitement and pride about the graduation to their parents.

The strongest reason for the high parent turnout for graduation may have been that parents were genuinely proud of the progress their children had made in the program and of the role they had played in teaching them. They may have seen the graduation as the symbolic culmination of their participation in a program about which they were very enthusiastic.

Programmatic Implication

Group meetings should not be omitted from the program model. *Since parents were not required to attend group meetings in order to receive and role play the HIPPY materials on a bi-weekly basis (as specified in the HIPPY model), they did not have to attend group meetings in order to continue their participation in the program. It is likely that parents did not perceive group meetings as an essential part of the HIPPY program and therefore did not make the effort to attend group meetings.*

Because group meetings were held so infrequently, the program coordinators and the parents had little contact with each other. As a result, the coordinators could not monitor parents' progress directly but had to rely solely on reports from the paraprofessionals. In addition, the parents did not benefit from the support and guidance of the program coordinators as the paraprofessionals did.

Furthermore, parents did not form a support group. Parallel to the paraprofessionals' meetings, group meetings should serve as a forum for parents to communicate to each other their reactions to the program, to learn from the experiences of others, to receive support from other parents and the coordinator for any difficulties they are having, and to raise parenting or community-related issues for group discussion. Such a parent support group can provide the basis for extending the parents' peer network and for encouraging them to organize around community issues.

The Paraprofessional Group Experience

Weekly Meetings

Tanette was particularly interested in working closely with the paraprofessionals to facilitate their personal and professional development. She believed that the parents would benefit indirectly through their relationship with their paraprofessional. Tanette described her viewpoint this way:

> "The paraprofessional meetings provide the basis for building feelings of empowerment. Some of these women are not used to making their own decisions—they've always been told what to do and how to live. As the paraprofessionals become empowered, they empower the parents they work with by acting as role models."

Her philosophy was evident in her management style. The meetings of the paraprofessionals were structured informally to allow them to build rapport. Tanette allowed for an informal period before the official start of each meeting during which the paraprofessionals would joke with each other and catch upon each other's news. The formal part of the meeting was structured to include a period of role-playing and a discussion of home visits and plans for upcoming HIPPY events and group meetings. However, these discussions were open and informal, creating a climate in which the paraprofessionals appeared to feel free to share their personal and work-related concerns and providing opportunities for them to offer each other support and advice as to how to handle emerging issues. The open-ended structure of the meetings also encouraged the paraprofessionals to take the initiative in deciding what to talk about and to develop their own ideas about the kinds of group meetings and events they wanted to plan.

Fun and Friendship

Right from the beginning, there was a natural camaraderie and cohesion present among the seven paraprofessionals. Not only did they share a common group membership as HIPPY paraprofessionals, but they all shared the common identity as African-American mothers on public assistance, struggling to raise their children in the Brownswell community. Many of the paraprofessionals were already acquainted

prior to their participation in HIPPY. Two of them, Jacky and Janet, had worked together as HIPPY paraprofessionals the previous year and were old friends. Tracy and Lorraine lived in the same building. Gloria became interested in volunteering for the HIPPY program through her sister Jacky.

One of the most striking characteristics of the group was the fun they had while working. This took the form of joking, teasing, gossiping, exchanging stories, dancing, and listening to music. After the Halloween party for the HIPPY parents and children, the clean-up time became an extended party for the paraprofessionals. The rap music was turned up, and they danced and joked as they stacked chairs and put food away.

When asked what she liked best about being a HIPPY paraprofessional, Janet said she liked the fact that she could have fun and "horse around" with the other paraprofessionals. She added that this ability to have fun with her coworkers was what set this job apart from other jobs she had had in the past. A visitor to one paraprofessional meeting commented after a particularly lively demonstration of role-playing, "It's nice to see people having fun together while doing important work."

A strong sense of group identity and pride emerged in the group. Tammy affectionately called the paraprofessionals her "homegirls" and, "the sisters." Some of the paraprofessionals asked others to be godmothers to their children. When an argument erupted between Tracy and Lorraine, Tracy asked Jacky to take her side. However, Jacky refused to get involved, saying, "All I know is we're supposed to be one big family."

The paraprofessionals began to recognize the value of the group as a vehicle for socializing. After one enthusiastic discussion about possible trips the paraprofessionals and parents could take in the spring, Tracy said, "Sometimes we don't have anything to do on Saturdays. Now we get to explore a little, instead of being boxed in at home."

Jean, the coordinator, agreed, saying, "You have a network now so there's no need to sit at home being bored. You could decide among yourselves what you want to do on the weekend."

Throughout the course of the year, the paraprofessionals organized parties and celebrations for each other marking important life events such as birthdays, christenings, and baby showers. Meals were also a common occasion for getting together socially. Tammy, who had a talent and love for cooking, hosted several informal luncheons at her home.

Support and Motivation

The paraprofessionals were a support group for one another. They motivated each other to do better; they shared information, advice, and stories on personal and work-related issues; and they provided each other with emotional support when things got tough. For example, Tammy, who had a heart condition, announced at a meeting one day that it looked like she might require surgery. She explained to the group in detail about her condition and urged everyone to come and visit her in the hospital: "I want to hear every detail that happens in here while I'm in the hospital. Call me every day and speak to me on the intercom." Tammy said she might have to discontinue HIPPY for a few months and asked Tanette if she could still come to the staff retreat to the mountains being planned for the spring. Tammy never was hospitalized, but the support she received from the paraprofessionals and her feeling of belonging to a group were probably very helpful to her during this difficult period.

The paraprofessionals also motivated and supported each other in making personal changes in their lives. For instance, being overweight was a problem for many of them. As a New Year's resolution they all decided to go on diets. In the ensuing discussion, the paraprofessionals talked about how they would help each other watch their weight, and Tanette explained that dieting involved good nutrition, not just eating less. Jacky also started an exercise class for the paraprofessionals toward the end of the year. The paraprofessionals went one evening a week to the Salvation Army to do aerobic exercises.

At the end of the program year, Tammy and Wanda both decided they need full-time jobs for the summer. They supported each other in the job-hunting process. Tammy located a company hiring for a position that seemed appropriate for them. Tammy and Wanda took turns looking after their children while the other took the test and interviewed for the job. Tammy decided beforehand that there would be no hard feelings between them if one got the job and the other didn't. They decided that if neither of them got the job, they would take each other out for lunch as a consolation.

Programmatic Implication

Weekly paraprofessional training meetings can provide paraprofessionals with a support group that solidifies and enriches the work experience. *The structure of the paraprofessional meeting provided a forum for the growth of a support-group environment. The meetings were somewhat unstructured to allow time for informal socializing and the development of rapport among the paraprofessionals. Discussion of home-visiting problems allowed the paraprofessionals to share their work experiences, both problems and successes, and to receive support from their colleagues and the coordinator. These discussions also enabled the paraprofessionals to develop their skills in verbalizing issues and problem-solving.*

By sharing the same fairly intensive paraprofessional training experience and by working together as peers, the paraprofessionals formed close bonds with one another. They motivated each other to do better, gave each other emotional support through difficulties in their personal and professional lives, and formed friendships that extended beyond their working relationships.

HIPPY as a Bridge to the Work World

Bridge Between the Worlds of Home and Work

For the paraprofessionals the experience of working in the HIPPY program served as an important bridge between the worlds of home and work. While all of the paraprofessionals had some prior job experience, five had stopped working when they had children. Five of them were single and all were raising very young children. All were receiving some form of public assistance. For these women, working full-time and raising their children presented difficult problems. The costs of child care and the types of jobs available to the paraprofessionals, none of whom had education beyond a high school diploma, meant that future employment was not perceived as a realistic option. Two paraprofessionals described how they had tried to go back to work after having children but had to quit because of the child-care problem.

Another described how she had been able to work as a family day-care provider for many years while raising her children only because she cared for children in her home. For low-income families, child care absorbs a significant portion of household income. Furthermore, because they lacked job experience and skills, most could expect only minimum wage jobs that could not maintain a family of four above the poverty line.

One of the primary reasons that the paraprofessional position provided a good transition to the work world was the flexibility and the nature of the work itself. It fit the family needs and concerns of the paraprofessionals. Tanette, the coordinator, described it in this way:

> This job fits well with the paraprofessionals' own personal lives and concerns. I like to stress that women should develop or find jobs that don't compartmentalize work and family but combine the social and family aspects with work. I feel that women shouldn't be forced to decide between going to Wall Street and abandoning their families and staying home and shutting out a work life. It's important for women to create the kind of job that can accommodate work and family life. But it is difficult to find this kind of job—one that is flexible and accommodating. Unfortunately, most other jobs the paraprofessionals will go on to don't have the flexibility of this one, especially the ones that the paraprofessionals will qualify for.

The paraprofessionals were able to structure their work hours around the complex demands on their time. These demands included child care and other family responsibilities, as well as frequent visits to various social service offices required to maintain and receive their public assistance benefits. Home visiting appointments could be made at any time during the week and were negotiated between parent and paraprofessional. If a scheduled appointment was inconvenient for either parent or paraprofessional one week, it could be rescheduled. The fact that most paraprofessionals were either neighbors or lived within a few blocks of their parents made it easier to reschedule appointments and meant that the paraprofessionals did not have to commute to work.

The nature of the work itself fit the family concerns and interests of the paraprofessionals. Since the paraprofessionals themselves were working with their own children in HIPPY, they could draw on their experience to help parents cope with the problems that arose in the process of learning how to teach their children. Moreover, the paraprofessionals identified with the concerns of the parents they worked with; they too were mothers on public assistance struggling to give their children the best educational opportunities. The home-visiting issues that the paraprofessionals raised for discussion in their meetings, such as health, housing, marital difficulties, and school problems, were often issues that they were dealing with in their own lives. The paraprofessionals demonstrated this sense of identification with the parents they worked with by their extraordinary commitment to helping them cope with the challenges they faced in doing HIPPY.

The Transition to Employment

The number of hours the paraprofessionals worked each week and their weekly salaries allowed them to maintain their public assistance benefits while providing them with valuable work experience. Tanette believed that the job provided an important transitional experience for the paraprofessionals. She encouraged them to stick with the job so as to develop the skills and experience they would need for a full-time job. When Tracy informed Tanette that she was offered a secretarial job but turned it down, Tanette reassured her that she did the right thing and that she needed time to develop her job skills. One of the group who quit at the beginning of the year to take a job as a cashier subsequently quit that job as well. Tanette felt that she probably left her paraprofessional job prematurely and was not yet ready to handle full-time employment. Tanette invited a life-transition counselor from the Board of Education to speak to the paraprofessionals about making the transition from public assistance to employment.

Development of Job Skills

Perhaps one of the most important ways in which HIPPY served as a bridge to the work world was by providing the paraprofessionals with the opportunity to develop important job skills.

Clerical and Time Management Skills. Scheduling home visits required considerable organizational skill, for the paraprofessionals had to learn how to coordinate their own schedules with the schedules of the eight to ten parents they visited. None had had previous experience in organizing schedules for others outside their own families. Learning how to take responsibility for keeping appointments, following up on parents who could not keep their appointments, and coming to meetings regularly, were useful skills that the paraprofessionals acquired on the job. One of them said that working with HIPPY also helped her organize her own life.

Although the paraprofessionals complained in the beginning about scheduling difficulties, they soon developed strategies for handling cancellations and rescheduling. If a parent was not home when a paraprofessional called, she left a note requesting that the parent call them back to reschedule. The paraprofessionals learned that they had to be persistent about rescheduling, or parents would fall behind. Tanette described how Tammy had been especially persistent in keeping her parents on track:

> Tammy takes a lot of initiative with [her parents]. She calls them sometimes up to five times a week if they can't be reached, in order to reschedule their appointment so they will stay involved.

The paraprofessionals also developed various clerical skills. All were required to keep accurate written accounts of their work-related time and expenses so that their weekly pay-checks could be calculated. They were also responsible for keeping track of the number of activity packets needed each week so there would be enough for all of their parents, and for photocopying and collating the appropriate number. (At the time of this study, each HIPPY program received only one copy of each weekly activity packet.) Most parents were working on different weekly activity packets, so monitoring how many of which materials were needed for each parent on a given week could be quite demanding.

When Janet was asked what she learned on the job, she summed it up in this way:

> You have to keep yourself organized and see that you have time to work with parents. You have to get together papers and books and write down this and that. It helps you to get more organized.

Writing Skills. The paraprofessionals were required to keep written accounts of their parents' progress on weekly

report forms. At the beginning of each home visit, the paraprofessional had to record each parent's response to a series of standard questions from the report form designed to monitor how consistently the parent had been working with the child and how he/she was faring in other areas of his/her life. After the visit, the paraprofessional wrote a brief evaluation of the home visit and the parent's progress that week.

However, the paraprofessionals were very inconsistent about completing these report forms. They preferred talking about home-visiting issues during the weekly paraprofessional meetings and were not comfortable with writing. Although the paraprofessionals were praised when they occasionally did turn reports in, neither Tanette nor Jean consistently pressured them to complete their forms. They did not emphasize to the paraprofessionals the importance of monitoring their parents' progress in written form. Thus, it is likely that the paraprofessionals did not develop their writing skills as much as they could have.

Interpersonal Communication Skills. A vital skill required of the paraprofessionals was the ability to communicate with the parents. They needed to become effective communicators in order to recruit parents into the program, to teach them how to use the materials, to engage them in the process of learning how to teach their children, and to motivate them to continue despite various obstacles to their participation in the program.

Many paraprofessionals mentioned communication as being one of the more important skills they had learned. When Wanda was asked what she had learned on the job, she said, "I learned how to talk to different people with different personalities and how to express my feelings to them."

Wanda explained that many parents felt uncomfortable about role-playing the materials. She said that by acting out both the parts of parent and child to show them how it was done, she was able to make them feel less embarrassed about participating. Tammy also talked about how she had learned to motivate parents:

> Parents have a lot of problems to deal with. They are interested in the program in the beginning, but after a while they may start to get discouraged. So I talk to them and let them know that even though you have a problem and you may not feel like working on it today, you can continue to work on it and in a couple of days it may get better. Then I go back to them, and they feel better about the program.

Public Speaking Skills. The paraprofessionals also developed public speaking skills. As a result of the agency's promotion of the Brownswell HIPPY program as a model program, HIPPY received a good deal of attention from the media and from funders and social-service agency administrators interested in starting their own HIPPY programs. On several occasions, social-service people observed paraprofessionals in meetings and asked questions about their work. The paraprofessionals were also asked to present their work formally at two separate forums on HIPPY. At each of these forums, the paraprofessionals demonstrated role-playing of the HIPPY materials, spoke about their work, and answered audience questions.

In order to prepare for the first forum, Tanette set aside a whole day to help the paraprofessionals develop their ideas for the presentation. The group brainstormed ideas for describing the different components of the program, and each then chose one of these areas to present. Preparing for and giving public presentations on their work afforded the paraprofessionals the opportunity to learn to articulate their ideas about the HIPPY program and also about their role as paraprofessionals.

Growth of Professional Identity. The paraprofessionals began to develop a professional identity and an awareness of themselves as HIPPY representatives. Tanette described how one developed a greater sense of professionalism:

> Jacky used to really fly off the handle. But now she is more professional in dealing with people. She realizes that she represents HIPPY now wherever she goes or whoever she talks to. She is aware of herself as a HIPPY representative. Jacky herself has said to me, "I'm a professional now—I have to carry myself differently."

The paraprofessionals also developed a sense of identity as professionals through the attention they received from the media. A film short was made of the paraprofessionals speaking about HIPPY. Two of the paraprofessionals' children posed with Kathleen Turner for a publicity shot promoting the agency's fundraiser event that accompanied a short article in a major Centerville newspaper. The major city-wide newspaper also interviewed one of the paraprofessionals for an article concerning early education programs with home-visiting components. By seeing themselves represented in the media, the paraprofessionals could perceive tangible evidence that their work was important, not only to their own community but to a larger public.

The paraprofessionals also attended a special dinner hosted by the agency, to which the Mayor of Centerville was invited as an honorary guest. After this event, one of the group commented that, besides being exciting, meeting the Mayor had made her realize how important her work was.

Development of Analytical and Problem-solving Skills. During the course of the year, the paraprofessionals developed their ability to articulate and resolve work-related problems. The first step in being able to analyze and solve problems is learning how to state the problem. Tanette and Jean encouraged the paraprofessionals to articulate home-visiting problems by setting aside time during each meeting to discuss issues that arose during weekly visits and by encouraging the participants to discuss various ways of handling these problems. The issues commonly raised ranged from scheduling problems to serious social problems such as drug abuse or family problems that prevented parents from keeping up with the program.

In the beginning, the paraprofessionals were reluctant to raise home-visiting problems at meetings and had difficulty articulating the issues. They often felt overwhelmed by their parents' problems and uncertain how to help. The coordinators encouraged them to try to understand and empathize with problems that parents faced and to show them that while they might not be able to solve a parent's problem, they might be able to help that parent continue in the program.

Towards the end of the year, Tanette commented on how the paraprofessionals had developed their ability to discuss and handle the home-visiting issues professionally:

> The discussions on home visits have gotten better. The paraprofessionals have become better able to separate the personal issues from the issues related to HIPPY. For example, at first they would focus more on complaining about their parents' problems. But these conversations have evolved into more practical discussions. The group discussion enables them to look at problems in a clinical way and get beyond just reacting on an emotional level and to try to understand the issue. It gets them to think about how they might

help that parent. It also helps them go back into the setting and try to work on the problem. I commend the paraprofessionals for being able to work professionally and continue despite all of the crises their parents go through.

Later in the year, Tanette noted how the paraprofessionals were developing their analytic skills and beginning to think more independently:

> In the beginning the paraprofessionals wanted to be told how to do things—now they work it through themselves. They are developing their analytic skills so if they have a problem they know how to think it through. For instance, they used to ask me what to do if one of their mothers couldn't keep a scheduled appointment. I would say, "Talk to your mother more. You know her best." Then the paraprofessional would come back to me and say, "I took steps myself to resolve the problem." They began to rely on their own ability. I would just dialogue with them about the different approaches they could use and they would invariably come up with the best solution, since they knew the situation best.

When asked what she had learned from HIPPY, the thing Janet mentioned first was her new-found ability to address problems instead of avoiding them:

> One thing I've learned is how to deal with situations. That's changed me. It used to be that if a problem came up, I usually just didn't bother with it. Instead of working it out, I usually would just leave it alone. I wouldn't try to solve it. Now I've learned that I've got to talk it out with the person and learn how to solve it myself instead of holding it in. When it came to the HIPPY program, I learned to talk it out because I noticed we always talked problems out.

Leadership and Planning Skills. The paraprofessionals' role involved planning, organizing, and implementing group meetings and events for themselves and the parents. The group meeting was a forum for discussing ideas and plans for program activities. Sometimes ideas for meetings and events evolved naturally from discussions about personal or work-related issues that the paraprofessionals raised. At other times, Tanette attempted to elicit their participation in the decision-making process by presenting different ideas for events and then asking the group what they would like to do and how they would plan it.

At first, the paraprofessionals had difficulty taking the initiative in planning and were more involved in implementing plans that Tanette or Jean had suggested. However, later in the year, they became more actively involved, coming up with their own ideas and plans.

The paraprofessionals were most fully involved in planning the end-of-year graduation for the HIPPY parents and children. This event required considerable detailed long-range planning because food and entertainment were needed for over 200 parents, children, and other family members. There was a lot of excitement about the graduation, and the paraprofessionals generated many ideas for what they wanted to have happen. They decided that they wanted to make HIPPY tee-shirts and buttons for all the parents, children, and paraprofessionals in the program. They also decided to make a huge HIPPY banner that they could hang in the park in which the graduation was to be held. Although they could have just personally invited the parents to attend, the paraprofessionals decided to send formal invitations by mail. With Jean's help, the paraprofessionals planned and organized this event over the course of about four months. They took a lot of pride in their work an worked many uncompensated hours overtime to complete the arrangements. The event was a huge success drawing out almost all of the parents and children.

For most of the paraprofessionals, this was their first experience working at a job in which they were involved in program planning and decision-making. When asked what made this job different from her other work experiences, Tammy said, "In my other job, they had just one set of rules. If they said it's this way, that's the way it had to go. With the HIPPY program, you can really speak your opinions."

Another paraprofessional echoed this sentiment:

> When I worked as a cashier, my boss used to tell us, "The customer is always right." I was always too scared to speak out on the job for fear of losing it. But with HIPPY, you get to speak your own mind without holding it in. HIPPY has taught me that I can open up and be heard. Now, if I have something to say, I say it!

Career Development and Guidance

Both coordinators stressed to the paraprofessionals that this job was a stepping stone to other jobs. Together the group discussed how their new job skills would prepare them for more professional work. With the support and encouragement of Tanette and Jean, the paraprofessionals began to think about the kind of work they would like to do in the future. They frequently went to Tanette or Jean for advice. For instance, Janet talked to Jean about her interest in computer science, and Jean offered to help her learn word processing on the computer at the agency's office.

Jean arranged for the paraprofessionals to attend a career development workshop. Molly, the workshop leader, started by telling them the story of her own career path. She said she started out as a mother on public assistance many years before. She has been able to work her way through school because she realized that if she wanted to get off public assistance and get paid for the kind of work she loved best—social work—she was going to have to get an education.

Molly talked about the importance of knowing who you are:

> Many of us get so involved in caring for other people and answering to their needs that we don't know what our own needs are. We're just Johnny's mother, or Joe Blow's wife. It's important to figure out what your interests, skills, values, and beliefs are.

She then asked each of the paraprofessionals to think about the kind of work they would like to be doing in fifteen years and to write down ten forces working against that goal and ten forces working for it. They seemed to find this difficult. After some joking, each one told the group what her career goal was. Janet wanted to own a beauty parlor; Tammy wanted to start a catering business; Wanda wanted to be a first-grade teacher; Lorraine wanted to be a physical therapist or a social worker; and Tracy wanted to own a candy store.

The paraprofessionals talked enthusiastically about this workshop for a long time after. On the way home, they discussed how having children was a big obstacle in being able to go back to school and develop a career.

Job Commitment and Responsibility

The nature of the job fostered a sense of responsibility and commitment in the paraprofessionals towards the parents

with whom they worked. In order to teach parents and enable them to continue in the program, they had to help them handle many serious problems in other areas of their lives. This often required extraordinary commitment on their part. Tracy described how she regularly spent twice the allotted time for home visiting to work with one of her parents who was a poor reader and needed extra coaching. She also talked about spending up to three hours on home visits with one of her mothers who was never ready when Tracy called. Apparently Tracy spent a long time listening to a grandmother who was lonely and "talked Tracy's ear off" whenever she visited.

For many paraprofessionals, HIPPY was their first experience working at a job that they found meaningful and to which they felt committed. They took pride and satisfaction in their work because they felt that they had a say in how the program ran and that the work they did made a difference in the lives of the parents in the program.

Three of the paraprofessionals had turned down other job possibilities in order to continue with the program. During one meeting, Tracy told the group that she had recently turned down a well-paying secretarial job that had been referred to her through the College of Secretarial Science that she had attended. She said that even though the job was only part-time, it would have interfered with her HIPPY work. She had told the guidance counselor that her boss was pregnant and she didn't want to let her down. She couldn't abandon the eight HIPPY parents with whom she was working.

Some members of the group wanted to continue as paraprofessionals after their two years with HIPPY were over. However, Tanette explained that the job was only a two-year position and that they would have to find other work after this time. She added that she hoped they would all stay in contact and that she would be available to support them in looking for other work.

Tanette explained why the paraprofessionals were so committed to their job:

> The paraprofessionals like this job because of its family flexibility and because they find it so much fun. The paraprofessionals identify with their work and feel what they are doing is important.

While Tanette felt that the experience of success on the job and commitment to their work were key elements in building the paraprofessionals' confidence in their ability to handle future jobs, she also sometimes found it hard to know when to encourage them to move on. It was understandable that they wanted to stay with HIPPY where they had a secure environment in which to learn and practice new skills. Yet, Tanette was very aware that because the project was supported with grant money the jobs could only be guaranteed for one year at a time. There were no benefits and no other career opportunities within the agency. Consequently, she knew she wanted to encourage them to use this experience as a stepping stone, but she was concerned with the timing of the transition. She felt that if they moved to a new job too soon, they might not have a successful experience and become discouraged once again. She also wondered whether they should be required or encouraged to fulfill their commitment to the program by finishing the year.

Programmatic Implications

The position of HIPPY paraprofessional provides lower-income parents with work experience. *However, further training and support for their career development should be provided. The paraprofessional work experience enhanced job skills, provided career guidance, and the opportunity to do meaningful work. The job offered a potential transitional work experience from welfare to full-time employment because the job fit their family interests as mothers; its flexibility and part-time nature enabled them to balance their work and family responsibilities. Yet several issues must be considered when viewing this job experience as transitional. The problem of finding affordable child care may mean that the transition cannot be made without great difficulty. Also, the value of getting more stable employment has to be balanced with the length of time needed to benefit fully from the HIPPY job experience and to increase the chances of success at a new job.*

Paraprofessionals should have the opportunity to develop many different skills, especially those that do not come easily. *Unfortunately, one important job skill that the paraprofessionals in this study did not develop was their writing skill. An important part of paraprofessionals' job is writing weekly parent progress reports. However, because these paraprofessionals were reluctant to write reports and the coordinators did not enforce this requirement, the paraprofessionals did not develop writing skills on the job.*

The program coordinator can become an important source of guidance and information for the paraprofessionals. *By supplying relevant information and suggesting different alternatives for handling various problems, the coordinators provided guidance and advice to the paraprofessionals for their personal and work-related concerns. In addition, the coordinators encouraged them to become involved in community events and issues. For instance, by emphasizing the importance of the issue of lead poisoning and urging the paraprofessionals to attend the city lead-poisoning meetings, the coordinators strongly influenced them to become actively involved.*

HIPPY as a Bridge to the Community

The HIPPY program served as a bridge to the community by providing the paraprofessionals with the opportunity to extend their peer network to other parents in the neighborhood and to become aware of, and involved with, community issues. By developing a larger network of friends and increasing their involvement with community affairs, the paraprofessionals became more connected with their neighborhood and began to see it as a valuable resource.

Extended Peer Network

Many of the paraprofessionals talked about friendships they had formed with their parents as a result of working with them in HIPPY. Tammy talked about her relationship with her parents in this way:

> We really get along. We knew each other before, from saying "Hi" on the street, but not name-wise or anything. But now it's really good, because they call if there's a problem or something they don't understand, and we talk about it. . . . But we don't just talk about HIPPY. If I go to them and they're sick or one of their

> children is sick, I'll call them back to find out how their children are doing. It's amazing how for years you can just know somebody to say "Hi, how are you doing" and then get a really good friendship going in such a short time.

Tammy added that when she had hurt her back recently, four of her parents had called her up to find out how she was doing and to ask if she needed any help.

The paraprofessionals must be able to develop a rapport and trust with their parents early on since the parents must be willing to let the paraprofessionals into their homes and allow them to act as their teachers. Lorraine described how her parents began to feel more comfortable with her over time and how they started to open up:

> At first, my parents and I were uncomfortable with each other. Now I feel more comfortable because I really know them, and they act like we've been best of friends. They trust me now. They open up and tell me things they wouldn't normally tell other people. One of my parents always wants to talk to me now. She says she tells me things she couldn't even talk to her family about.

Some of the paraprofessionals began to mix socially with parents with whom they had developed friendships. Jacky said she had gotten very close with some of her mothers and went out with them all the time. Wanda said that a lot of her parents had moved closer to her and that one had invited her to her daughter's birthday party. The paraprofessionals seemed to enjoy especially the social aspects of their work and the opportunity the job gave them for meeting new people and making friends. Janet said one of the things she liked most about HIPPY was getting out of the house and meeting new people. Both Wanda and Janet commented on how much fun they had working with their parents on HIPPY, especially doing the role playing. Lorraine said that the part of home visiting that she enjoyed most came after the lesson was over, when she and the parents would just talk.

By providing a valued service to many parents and children in their neighborhood, it is likely that HIPPY enhanced the paraprofessionals' social standing in the community. While no one in the group expressed this directly, some did talk about the importance of their work for the community and the sense of pride they felt in being able to help their parents and children.

Involvement in Community Issues

Both coordinators, Tanette and Jean, were interested in getting the paraprofessionals and parents to perceive their neighborhood as a valuable resource and to become aware of, and involved in, community issues and events. This emphasis on community involvement reflects the importance that both the Brownswell HIPPY program and the sponsoring agency placed on community empowerment and development.

With the encouragement of Tanette and Jean, the paraprofessionals participated in several community events, which included volunteering at a local soup kitchen for Thanksgiving and attending community forums on child abuse and other issues. Also, the coordinators encouraged the paraprofessionals to regard their local park as a valuable resource. During the spring, several events were held in Tangle Park, including the HIPPY graduation and a group meeting. The paraprofessionals also began to use the park for picnics and informal social get-togethers.

Through discussions of home visits at the weekly meetings, Tanette and Jean encouraged the paraprofessionals to become aware of how personal and social problems often related to larger social issues in the community. For instance, at one meeting, Tammy discussed problems she was having with one of her parents, whom she suspected of being an alcoholic. Wanda responded to Tammy's obvious frustration about working with this mother, by saying, "Alcoholism is a big issue in this community. For all the people you see openly, drunk, there are as many who are hidden alcoholics. A lot of people who drink only beer, but a lot of it, think they're not alcoholics." The group agreed with Wanda, and a discussion ensued about how this problem affected many people they knew in the community.

Ideas for group meetings on community issues often originated from discussions in these meetings of various housing, health, and social problems with which the paraprofessionals and their parents were dealing. For instance, at one meeting, Janet raised problems she was experiencing with her landlady and asked the group for their advice. Apparently, her landlady had not made necessary repairs on her apartment, including repairing plumbing, a stove, and a flight of crumbling stairs, on which her husband had slipped and hurt his foot. To make matters worse, her landlady wanted to raise her rent before her lease was up. Janet asked the group whether this was legal and what, if anything, she could do. Tanette told Janet what her legal rights were in the matter and gave her the name and number of a housing advocacy group she could contact for further advice.

A lively discussion ensued about conflicts with landlords and housing problems. Members of the group told stories of visiting homes with leaking roofs, peeling paint, broken stairwells, and non-functioning utilities. In most of these cases, the landlord had refused to make repairs. In some cases, paraprofessionals and parents were in the process of taking their landlords to court; in other cases, tenants accepted the situation as something they had little power to change. In the process of discussing this issue as a group, the paraprofessionals realized that housing was a problem that in one way or another was shared by almost everyone they knew. After this discussion, they decided that landlord–tenant issues would be a good topic for a future group meeting.

A housing advocate from a city-wide housing task force was asked to speak at the group meeting on these issues. The speaker, Mr. Jones, provided an overview of the basic legal rights of tenant and discussed the kinds of actions tenants could take to address the concerns raised. He gave out a pamphlet on tenants' rights and encouraged the paraprofessionals to distribute them to their parents. He also informed the paraprofessionals that he provides free legal counsel to people with housing problems and urged them and their parents to call him if they needed legal advice.

This group meeting provided a forum for the paraprofessionals to raise the many questions they had concerning their own housing problems and those of their parents, as well as to help them feel that they could begin to take action on these concerns. A few weeks after the group meeting on housing issues, janet reported that she had been receiving advice from Mr. Jones about how to handle her housing problems and that, as a result of her persistent complaints, her landlady had begun to make some repairs.

Programmatic Implication

Paraprofessional and group meetings can be valuable forums for involvement in community issues. *The group discussions concerning home-visiting problems that occurred in paraprofessional meetings enabled the partici-*

pants to become aware that problems that individual parents were experiencing were often related to larger social problems in the community. Sometimes ideas for group meetings on community issues grew out of these discussions.

Group meetings were a particularly effective tool for encouraging the paraprofessionals to become aware of, and involved in, community issues because they provided a nonthreatening, personal forum in which to ask questions, receive information, and establish a dialogue with the speakers. Speakers who were community activists were especially effective, for they encouraged paraprofessionals to take action.

The Issue of Lead Poisoning: An Example of Community Involvement

The story of how the paraprofessionals became involved in the issue of lead poisoning provides an excellent example of how HIPPY can be a vehicle for community organization. As a result of a group meeting on lead poisoning, a serious problem affecting many residents of Brownswell, the paraprofessionals became aware of how it affects them and parents in their neighborhood and began to speak out and take action on the issue.

How the Paraprofessionals Became Involved

During one meeting, Tanette asked the group whether they would be interested in having a group meeting on the topic of lead poisoning. Tanette described how lead poisoning is a serious problem in Brownswell and how it can cause brain damage among young children, who often get the paint in their systems by eating it. A lively discussion of the issue ensued, and the paraprofessionals expressed interest in having a group meeting on the topic.

Tanette invited two community advocates from an environmental health center to speak at a group meeting on the issue of lead poisoning. The two speakers, Manny and Martha, informed the paraprofessionals that Brownswell was one of four neighborhoods that experts called "the lead belt" because of its high concentration of poorly maintained buildings with peeling lead paint. He pointed out that lead poisoning mainly affects African-Americans and other minorities because of their generally poor housing conditions and that the problem needs to be addressed through community action on the part of those affected, like the HIPPY parents and paraprofessionals.

Manny encouraged the group to become involved in the issue by attending monthly meetings of the city lead-poisoning planning committee. This committee was set up by the city to identify community needs and to inform community residents about a city-run screening and inspection project, in which inspectors are sent door-to-door to check for lead-paint violations and to conduct free blood-test screenings. Manny emphasized the importance of African-Americans speaking out at these meetings and taking a leadership role on the issue instead of letting the city take the lead. He urged the paraprofessionals to bring their parents out:

> You need to be watchdogs over these city agencies. You need to demand answers and documentation for what they're doing. If no one is looking over their shoulders, they're not going to do what they have to do.

All the paraprofessionals expressed an interest in attending and said they would bring the parents they worked with.

A core group of four paraprofessionals began to attend regularly the monthly city meetings held at a local health center. They became increasingly vocal about their concerns, asking the city health and housing officials questions about the legal and health issues relating to lead poisoning.

After one city meeting, Lorraine expressed surprise at herself for having been so vocal at the meeting:

> I just opened up and started gabbing. . . . Some people don't have a voice to speak up. I'm like that also, usually. I don't speak up—I just let it ride. But when something really gets to me, like this, I just open up and I can't keep my mouth shut.

The city meetings provided a vehicle for one paraprofessional to help directly one of her mothers whose children had been affected by lead poisoning. Tammy's parent, Latia, had three children who had been hospitalized for lead poisoning. At one city meeting, Tammy notified the city officials about Latia and her three children. As a result, the Department of Health (DOH) came out to conduct a blood screening in Latia's building two weeks later. Tammy was able to help the DOH inspectors gain access to the tenants in this building (who had initially refused to open their doors) by explaining to each of them who the inspectors were and why they wanted to conduct blood tests on their children. The tenants in the building decided to act when they learned that over seventy children had tested positive for lead poisoning. With the support and encouragement of Tammy, Latia was able to organize the tenants to take the landlord to court, and they subsequently won the case.

The city meetings also provided a vehicle for the paraprofessionals to take community action. Toward the end of the year, the city lead-poisoning planning committee organized a community lead-poison screening event in a large commercial plaza in Brownswell. The paraprofessionals were invited to be part of the planning committee, and they helped to organize some of the entertainment and publicity for the event. They also distributed flyers to parents in the neighborhood and organized face-painting activities for the children to entertain and distract them from their fears about having their blood drawn. Forty-seven children were tested at this event. At the final city meeting, the committee expressed its gratitude to the paraprofessionals for helping to make the event a success.

Why the Paraprofessionals Became Involved

The group meeting presentation was highly effective because the community advocates presented the issue in a persuasive way. While describing the severity of the problem, they also emphasized the importance of citizens taking action to address the problem and discussed the means for doing so. The speakers presented the information informally and personally, which permitted the paraprofessionals to establish a dialogue with them about their questions and concerns.

The effectiveness of the presentation was due in part to its political perspective and its emphasis on the importance of African-American solidarity. This encouraged the paraprofessionals to feel a sense of identity with other mothers in the

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community on this issue. The fact that the speakers pointed out that the problem was largely confined to poor African-American neighborhoods aroused in the paraprofessionals a sense of anger and injustice, which further motivated them to take action on the issue. During one paraprofessional meeting, Lorraine spoke eloquently about her anger over the fact that lead poisoning is largely an African-American problem and about the need to speak up on the issue:

> It really makes you upset, because most of the lead is in the black neighborhoods and the people who own the buildings don't care. You got to let them know that you want something done about it because it's your right to have it removed. I tell my parents, "You have a voice, and you should use it."

The paraprofessionals' involvement in the issue of lead poisoning was in large part due to Tanette's leadership and influence. By raising the issue of lead poisoning for discussion in a paraprofessional meeting, Tanette encouraged the group to become aware of the problem as it affected them and their parents. It is likely that she recognized this issue as one with great potential for mobilizing HIPPY parents, since it is one that seriously affected the lives of their children.

The fact that Tanette often reinforced the importance of the paraprofessionals' involvement in the issue was probably an important factor in motivating them. While Tanette did not feel that she had pushed the paraprofessionals to attend the city meetings, she did remind them regularly when meetings were scheduled and how important their attendance was. Tanette also reminded them of the importance of involving their parents in this issue. She herself acted as an example by being a regular and vocal participant at the city meetings.

By discussing their growing awareness of the problem of lead poisoning and by taking action as a group, the paraprofessionals supported and motivated each other to become further involved in the issue. They also influenced each other by talking about their growing awareness of the problem and how it affected their parents and the community. During one paraprofessional meeting Tammy mentioned that she had seen a TV show recently on the issue of lead poisoning and that she had begun to become more aware of the issue. Lorraine agreed, saying,

> Suddenly, you start seeing it and hearing it talked about everywhere—on TV, on the radio. It seems like everyone's talking about how you really have to do something about it.

Another crucial factor that led the paraprofessionals to become involved in the issue of lead poisoning was the fact that they were given structure and guidance in how to plan action. The city meetings provided a regular forum for the paraprofessionals to become informed about the issue, to raise questions and concerns, and to take action. For instance, the city representatives encouraged the paraprofessionals to help organize the community screening event by inviting them to be on the planning committee. Also, as a result of her participation in these meetings, Tammy was able to get the city to respond to the lead-poisoning complaint of one of her parents.

The paraprofessionals were less effective in taking action when they were not given support and guidance. For instance, Manny offered to come out and conduct free screenings in certain buildings if the paraprofessionals would arrange for their parents to be available on a certain day. Two paraprofessionals who had parents living in buildings with serious lead conditions expressed interest in having Manny help them organize such a screening. As a result, Jean, the coordinator, invited Manny to come and speak to these two about how to organize their parents, but these plans were never carried out—perhaps because Jean did not follow up by working with these paraprofessionals individually to help them organize their parents.

Programmatic Implication

Getting the paraprofessionals actively involved in a community is a complex process. *Several factors played a role in getting paraprofessionals involved in the lead-poisoning issue:*

1. *The coordinator identified the issue of lead poisoning as being a good topic for a group meeting since it was an issue that seriously affected the lives of children in the Brownswell community.*
2. *The speakers were community advocates and presented the issue at a group meeting in a meaningful way. They provided structure and guidance for involving the paraprofessionals and offered to help them organize their parents around the issue.*
3. *The coordinator encouraged the paraprofessionals to become involved and attend city meetings and reinforced the importance of their participation.*
4. *The paraprofessionals supported each other to take action in the issue. The few who attended the first city meeting told the others what they had learned and acted as models for their participation.*
5. *By speaking up on the issue and taking action, the paraprofessionals found that they could have an impact.*

AFTERWORD

The HIPPY program in Brownswell encountered some serious difficulties in its third and last year. Personnel changes in the sponsoring agency worked to the detriment of the fund-raising effort. Funding for the program, which had previously extended over several years, changed to a year-to-year basis, creating a sense of uncertainty about the future of HIPPY in Brownswell. In addition, the resignation of Tanette as program manager meant the loss of a leader deeply committed to the HIPPY philosophy and its implementation.

As a result of funding problems and Tanette's resignation, the sponsoring agency decided not to recruit a new group of parents with four-year-olds but to offer only the five-year-old program for families that had enrolled the previous year. Thus the total number of families served by the program was substantially reduced, and the number of paraprofessionals dropped to four.

The third year of the program proved to be both challenging and rewarding. Well aware of the problem of poor parent attendance at group meetings in previous years, Jean stressed this aspect of the program, but without great success. Parent turnouts continued to be spotty, although those who did attend benefited from workshops on topics such as "From Public Assistance to Work," "Tenants' Rights," and "AIDS Awareness." Jean and the paraprofessionals initiated three major projects in addition to ongoing ones like the lead-poisoning issue. HIPPY sponsored a public library enrollment program, a voter registration drive, and the establishment of a HIPPY library featuring African-American stories for both children and adults.

In addition to the workshops planned for parents, others tailored to the needs of the paraprofessionals were offered. Aware that their jobs with HIPPY would be ending, the paraprofessionals requested workshops focusing on job skills. Jean worked with the group on resume writing and organized workshops on government-assisted programs for recipients of public assistance and opportunities in the job market. Of the four paraprofessionals in the third-year program, two enrolled in college, one continued working for the sponsoring agency in another program, and one chose to stay home to care for a new baby.

A formal graduation for the parents and children of the HIPPY program was held at a local public school. Each child received a HIPPY bookbag, a Mother Goose book, and a pre-school activity book for parent and child to work with together during the summer.

Although there is no HIPPY in Brownswell at present, discussions have been held between the local school district and HIPPY USA about establishing a new program there. If these talks prove fruitful, parents and young children of Brownswell will again be able to benefit from this enjoyable and confidence-building family program.

APPENDIX A

HIPPY CURRICULUM AGE 4

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

		NUMBER OF HIPPY ACTIVITIES PER WEEK, RELATED TO SPECIFIC STORYBOOKS AND SKILLS																											
	WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Books	Total # Activities																														
Sounds I Hear	7	2	2	2					1																						
Sometimes Big, Sometimes Small	8			2	2	2	2																								
The Cat Who Looked . . .	7							1	2	2	2																				
A Surprise for Reggie	7											2	2	2	1																
Down the Path	6														2	2	2														
Maria's School	7																	2	2	2	1										
Goodbye Berry	6																					2	2	2							
Beware! Ducks Crossing	6																								2	2	2				
Secret Name	8																											2	2	3	1
Visual Discrimination same/different	19	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
small/big	6	3	2	1																											
shapes and colors	7		2	2	2							1																			
different pictures	10															2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1								
same pictures	10																							2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2
Eye-Hand Coordination follow the path	29	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
connect the dots	28			2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1
Spatial Perception on/under	5				1	1	2																								
tall/short	6							2	2	2																					
up/down	8										2	2	1	2		1															
next to	3														2	1															
front/behind	6																2	2	2												
between	2																			2											
Auditory Discrimination soft/loud	4						2	2																							
sound identification	10																							1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
Tactile Discrimination touch and tell	6															1	1	1	1	1	1										
Concept Summary look and find	6																										1	1	1	2	1
concept matrix	1																					1									
house games	1																														1
story summary	3										1										1										1
Logical Thinking matrix	31					2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
sorting	20									2	1	1	2	1	1		1	1	1	1	2	2	2								
best choice	10																						2	2	2	2	2				
my family	3																											2	1		

HIPPY CURRICULUM AGE 5

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

		NUMBER OF HIPPY ACTIVITIES PER WEEK, RELATED TO SPECIFIC STORYBOOKS AND SKILLS																											
	WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Books	Total # Activities																														
Brave Frog	7	2	2	3																											
Hundred Rooms	8				2	2	2	2																							
Pete and the Vegetable Soup	8								2	2	2	2																			
The Pigs Got Out	8												2	2	2	2															
Gary the Gardener	8																2	2	2	2											
An Afternoon at Emmi's	6																				2	2	2								
Something Else	5																							2	2	1					
Shawna's Bit of Blue Sky	5																										2	2	1		
Dan Goes to First Grade	5																												1	3	1
Visual Discrimination																															
same pictures	30	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
complete the picture	15	1	1	1	1		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
Eye-Hand Coordination																															
follow the path	15	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
connect the dots	31	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
copy numbers	10										1	1				1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
letters and numbers	10																						1	1		2	1	1	1	1	1
mazes	6																										1	2	1	1	1
Spatial Perception and Math Readiness																															
concept lotto	3	1	1			1																									
how many	37	2	1	2		1		2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Auditory Discrimination																															
sound games	18	1	1		1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1	1					
Logical Thinking and Problem Solving																															
matrix	20			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1				
best choice	9		1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1																		
signs	10												1	1	1	1	1	1		2	1	1									
senses	10																	2	1	2		1	1	1	1	1					
Memory and Verbal Expression																															
memory games	5																										1	1	1	1	1
what do you think	8																											1	2	1	3
story summary	3										1										1										1

APPENDIX B

Aide Interview

Work Experience

1. Before becoming a HIPPY Aide, did you work at any other types of jobs? If so, can you please describe this/these job(s) to me? *(Probes: Was it part- or full-time? How long did you work at each job? Did you like it? What made you stop?)*

2. There are a lot of different reasons for taking a job—because you need the money, because you want to get out of the house, because you like the type of work and it makes you feel good about yourself. How did you decide to become a HIPPY Aide? *(Probe: Did you start off as a mom or as an Aide? How did you first hear about HIPPY?)*

3. How is being a HIPPY Aide different from other types of jobs you have had? *(Probe: What things do you like more or less about it compared to other jobs?)*

4. Every job has its problems and frustrations, and also its moments of reward. What kinds of things about being an Aide do you find most enjoyable? What do you find hardest? *(Probes: How are these things enjoyable? frustrating? In what areas would you like more support? what kinds of support?)*

5. Having a new job usually involves stretching, growing, and learning new things. What kinds of things have you learned from being a HIPPY Aide? *(Probes: Has being a HIPPY aide made a difference for you—in the way you feel about yourself, the way you deal with other people, the way you approach day-to-day problems?)*

6. Have you thought about whether or not you would like to work at another type of job after this one, or are you content for now?

a. If so, what kind of job would you like? Why are you interested in doing this type of work? *(Probe: What kinds of things about this type of work would you like?)*

b. Do you think being a HIPPY Aide has prepared you in any way for doing this type of job? in what ways? *(Probes: What additional kinds of skills or knowledge do you think you will need to become ready to take a job like this? When do you think you will be ready?)*

Home Visits

1. Tell me about some of the problems that come up doing home visits? Can you give me some examples? *(Probe: What kinds of things make it difficult for you to work with a parent?)*

2. How do you handle these problems? *(Probe: Do you seek advice or help from other Aides? from your coordinator?)*

Aides and Parents

1. From what you and the other Aides say, it seems that many HIPPY parents struggle against obstacles in order to keep working in the program. Can you tell me about one of your parents who is struggling hard but still making it work? *(Probes: How does she make it work? How do you help her?)*

2. How many families did you start out working with? How many stopped doing HIPPY? Tell me about one or two parents who dropped out of HIPPY. *(Probes: Did you encourage them to continue? Why did they finally drop out?)*

3. How many families do you work with now?

4. While mothers are usually the ones who work directly with their child, it sounds as if often other family members, like the grandmother, the father, and sisters and brothers of the child, also get involved. Can you tell me about one or two families where this is true? *(Probe: Any families where the father works directly with the child? How do other members get involved? How is it helpful? Is it ever a problem? How?)*

5. Do your parents seem to enjoy HIPPY? If so, what do they enjoy about it? What don't they enjoy?

6. HIPPY is as much for the parent as it is for the child. Do you think HIPPY is making a difference for any of your parents? If so, How? *(Probe: I have heard aides talk about parents who are improving their reading skills, their confidence, and their relationship with their child. Have any of your parents benefited in these ways?)*

7. Aides not only help parents to teach their child the HIPPY materials, they can also provide support, information and help to parents who need it. Have you been able to provide this kind of help to any of your parents? Examples?

8. Have you become friends with any of your parents through being a HIPPY aide? If so, do you spend time together outside of HIPPY? What do you do?

9. Were you friends with any of the HIPPY aides before starting the program? Do you spend time with any of them outside of HIPPY? *(Probes: How do you spend your time together? Where do you go?)*

Group Meetings

So far, we have had four group meetings this year. Do you think we should have group meetings more often, less often, or as often as we do now? Why? *(Probes: If more often, how could we get more parents to come out?)*

APPENDIX C

Parent Interview

Ask the Aide why she selected this parent for me to interview and what she told the parent about the interview.

1. How did you first hear about HIPPY? What made you interested in participating in HIPPY?

2. Do you like the HIPPY program? *[If yes,]* What do you enjoy about it?
If the parent does not mention the HIPPY lessons, ask: Do you like the HIPPY lessons? *[If yes,]* What about them do you like? What don't you like?

3. Does your child enjoy HIPPY? What about it does s/he enjoy?

4. Tell me what you do when you do HIPPY with your child on a typical day. For example, what time do you usually do it? Where do you sit? How long do you do it for?

5. When you started the program and your aide came to visit you at home and role-played the HIPPY lessons with you for the first time, how did you feel? How do you feel now? What has changed?

6. Has HIPPY made a difference for your child? *[If yes,]* How?

7. Has there been a change in your relationship with your child since you started HIPPY? *[If yes,]* What has changed?

8. HIPPY is as much for the parent as it is for the child. Has HIPPY made a difference for you? *[If yes,]* How?

9. Sometimes, aides not only help parents to teach their child the HIPPY materials, but they also provide support, information, and help to parents who need it, has this been true for you? *[If yes,]* How?

10. How important do you feel education is for your child? for you?

11. Many things can get in the way of being able to do HIPPY with your child every day and to meet with your aide every week. Is it hard for you to find time to do HIPPY? *[If yes,]* What gets in the way?

12. Have you been to any group meetings? *[If yes,]* Which one(s)?

a. Why didn't you go to the other ones?

b. How do you feel about coming to group meetings?

c. What kinds of activities or discussion topics would make you want to come out to a group meeting?

APPENDIX D

Group Interview

Home Visits

1. When you started out as a new Aide, it must have been scary and exciting to make your first home visits. Tell me what it was like. How did you feel? What reactions did you get from parents? Can you tell me one or two stories about your first home visits?

2. How have your feelings about making home visits changed since then? How do parents react to your visits now?

3. What do you enjoy most about home visits?

4. Tell me about some of the problems that come up doing home visits? Can you give me some examples? *(Probe: What kinds of things make it difficult for you to work with a parent?)* How do you handle these problems? Do you handle the kinds of problems and issues that come up during your home visits differently, now, than you did when you first started?

Group Meetings

1. Group meetings are a way of bringing parents in the program together for support, information, and fun. If you had to plan the next few meetings, what would you do? Why? In your mind, what is the most important thing about the group meetings?

2. A few weeks ago, we had a group meeting on lead poisoning. That was one of the first meetings in which we had an outside speaker come and give a presentation. What did you think of it?

a. How many of your families have problems with lead poisoning? *[If any,]* How did you talk to them about the problem? Did you tell all your other mothers about what was said at the meeting? What did you tell them?

b. How do you feel about going to the monthly community lead-poison meetings? Would you like your mothers to come to the meetings? *[If yes,]* How will you encourage them to come?

APPENDIX E

NCJW Center for the Child Report *Spring 1993*

THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN HIPPY ON CHILDREN'S SCHOOL ADAPTATION: FIRST GRADE TEACHER RATINGS

A Preliminary Report of the NCJW Center for the Child

Amy J. L. Baker, Ph.D. and Chaya S. Piotrkowski, Ph.D.

This report presents preliminary data from a quasi-experimental study of the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) in which teachers rated HIPPY children as better adapted to the classroom during the beginning of first grade.

- **The Problem**

Public schools are facing an ever increasing rise in school failure, especially among poor children. Many poor children enter the formal public school system behind their more economically advantaged peers and fall further behind in their academic achievement over their years of schooling. Being poor is associated with a number of risk factors for children and families, many of which play a causal role in the child's lack of success at school (Halpern, 1989; Schorr, 1966; Shorr, 1988). Because school success is closely linked to later employability, a successful formal education is the most common pathway out of poverty (e.g., Schorr, 1988; William T. Grant Foundation Report, 1988).

- **The HIPPY Program**

One early approach to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and educational failure has been for programs to provide educational enrichment for preschool children living in poverty. More recently, programs have broadened their focus to include parents, who have been recognized as their children's first teachers.

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is one such family-oriented early intervention program that combines educational enrichment for preschool children and parent involvement. HIPPY is a two-year, early childhood education program for parents with limited formal education and their four- and five-year old children. The programs goals are to empower parents to be their children's primary educator, provide school readiness skills for children, and bring literacy into the home. As such, HIPPY aims to nurture learning at home and at school. Centered around school-readiness activities, HIPPY potentially has a wide range of benefits for children, parents, staff, and community.

Each HIPPY program consists of a professional coordinator, a team of paraprofessionals who make home visits and 50 to 250 participating families. The core elements of the program are bi-monthly home visits by paraprofessionals and bi-monthly group meetings for the parent led by the professional coordinator. In these settings, parents learn how to use the HIPPY educational activities each day with their children. The program spans 60 weeks, over two years, coinciding with the public school calendar.

HIPPY was developed in 1969 at the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University in Israel (Lombard, 1981). HIPPY has since been implemented in Turkey, Canada, Chile, the Netherlands, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States. The first HIPPY programs in the United States were established in 1984. During 1992, HIPPY served approximately 10,000 economically disadvantaged families across 17 states. All U.S. HIPPY programs are affiliated with HIPPY USA—an independent, national training and technical assistance center housed at the National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) headquarters in New York City.

Although HIPPY has been implemented in the United States for more than five years, until now there had been no comprehensive study of its effectiveness in this country. Evaluations of HIPPY have been conducted in Israel (Lombard, 1981), The Netherlands (Eldering, 1988) and South Africa (Adams, Skuy, & Fridjhon, 1992). However, such research, while encouraging, may not be applicable to families participating in the program in this country. Given the increasing expansion and interest in the HIPPY program across the United States, a careful evaluation of the program was clearly needed in this country.

- **Evaluation of HIPPY in the United States**

In response to this need, the NCJW Center for the Child launched a five-year, quasi-experimental,prospective set of

studies of the effectiveness of HIPPY in the United States. One of these studies is a three-site outcome study of the effects of HIPPY in Arkansas, Michigan, and New York.[1] A major question addressed by this three-site study is the extent to which HIPPY has a positive impact on children's school success. Zigler and Trickett (1978) among others have argued against a narrow focus on IQ as a measure of the impact of early interventions on school success. Longitudinal research on early intervention programs has supported this view by showing that children in such programs, while not maintaining initial IQ gains, scored better on reading and math achievement tests later in their school careers and were less likely to be retained, placed in special education classes, and to drop out of school (Lazar and Darlington, 1982).

Consistent with this perspective, school success in our study refers to a child's positive adaptation to the demands of the school environment, a positive academic self-image and timely graduation. A child's positive adaptation to school is shaped by a host of factors that include the child's individual cognitive skills, his/her motivations, parental support and involvement, the quality of the parent-child relationship, and the school itself. Positive adaptation to school is manifested by grade-level achievement and age-appropriate classroom behaviors that reflect self-direction, task orientation, interest in and enjoyment of learning.

It was hypothesized that participation in the HIPPY program would enhance a child's positive adaptation to school through its impact on both achievement and classroom behaviors. The HIPPY activities may affect achievement by providing children with on-going daily opportunities to engage in skill-building activities. The HIPPY activities are designed to help develop language skills, visual discrimination, visual-motor coordination, auditory discrimination and problem-solving skills, all considered important for achievement. HIPPY may also promote age-appropriate classroom behaviors by fostering enjoyment of learning and children's motivation to learn. Moreover, the daily parent-child book-reading and the activities linked to the HIPPY stories allow the child to practice a variety of behavioral skills important for successful adaptation to the classroom environment. These include listening, following directions, focusing on a task, paying attention to oral instructions, and using assistance.

- **The Study Design**

This three-site outcome study utilizes a quasi-experimental, pre-test post-test, two cohort design that follows almost 600 children (HIPPY and comparison children and their families) from age four through third grade. At the Arkansas site, a community control group was used for comparison with HIPPY families. Comparison families were identified through the same procedures as the HIPPY families and were matched to the program group on important demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, age and gender of child, family constellation, and preschool experience of the child. At the New York site, a lottery was held to randomly assign families into either HIPPY or the control group.[2]

At the start of the HIPPY program in 1990, comparison and HIPPY families and children in the first research cohort were administered a battery of tests that included measures of children's cognitive skills and the quality of the home environment. Two years later, upon completion of the HIPPY program, the first cohort of research families were visited again for post-testing. In the Fall of 1992, when this first cohort of children were entering first grade, their teachers completed the Child Classroom Adaptation Index (CCAI). This report presents preliminary findings from these first grade teacher ratings. Subsequent reports will present results concerning children's school achievement and other child and parent outcomes.

- **The Sample**

There were 121 Arkansas families in Cohort One, 66 HIPPY and 53 comparison. There were 75 New York families in Cohort One, 42 HIPPY and 33 comparison. In each site the families were predominantly low-income, minority families (African-American in Arkansas and Hispanic and African-American in New York). One-third were single-parent families; one-third reported government assistance as their primary source of income; and one-third of the parents had less than a high school degree. There were approximately equal numbers of boys and girls in each group. Group comparisons within each site on these demographic variables revealed no significant differences between the HIPPY and comparison families.

- **First Grade Teacher Ratings**

Teacher ratings have been shown to be a stable, reliable, and valid measure of children's functioning in the classroom (e.g., Spivak & Swift, 1973). Because teacher expectations shape children's performance, their perceptions are important. Teacher reports have been a central methodology in educational research in general and studies of early intervention programs in particular. For example, evaluations of Head Start, the Perry Preschool Project, Project Giant Step, and the home-based option of Head Start have all employed teacher ratings to assess the impact of the program on the quality of the child's behavior in the classroom (Meleen, Love, & Nauta, 1988; Bond et. al, 1982; ABT Associates, 1988).

Seventy first grade teachers across Arkansas and New York completed the Child Classroom Adaptation Index (CCAI). Developed by Dr. Halpern of the Erikson Institute and revised by the NCJW Center for the Child for use in this study, the CCAI assesses the quality of the child's adaptation to the classroom and includes questions about the teacher's perception of the child's:

- **Enjoyment of books and reading**
- **Listening and paying attention**
- **Task orientation**
- **Self-direction in learning**
- **Seeking and using assistance**
- **Curiosity**
- **Initiative**
- **Enjoyment of schoolwork**
- **School success**
- **Motivation to learn**
- **Readiness to learn**

Each child was rated on a scale from 1 to 5 in which "1" represents poor adaptation, "3" represents a good or moderate adaptation and "5" represents a very successful adaptation. Teacher ratings were available on 87 children in Arkansas (out of 121 originally in the first research cohort) and 56 children in New York (out of 75 originally in the first cohort of research families.)

• Preliminary Findings

Scores on all eleven items of the CCM were summed to create a total score of the child's adaptation to the classroom.[3]

In Arkansas, teachers rated boys who participated in HIPPY (mean = 3.5, sd = 1.0) as significantly better adapted to the classroom than boys not participating in HIPPY (mean = 2.8, sd = 1.1) $p < .03$. There were no significant differences between HIPPY and comparison girls. New York teachers rated HIPPY children (boys and girls combined) (mean = 3.5, sd = 1.1) as significantly better adapted to the classroom than children randomly assigned to the control group (mean = 2.7, sd = 13) $p < .01$. *Thus, teachers expected HIPPY children to be more successful than those who had not been in HIPPY.*

• Elimination of Possible Alternative Explanations

Two possible **alternative** explanations for the differences between HIPPY and comparison children were considered. First, were these differences between the HIPPY and comparison children due to noncomparability between the groups? Such differences may be due to the children in HIPPY being advantaged prior to their participation in HIPPY. Alternatively, they may be due to differential attrition from the sample; ie. the children for whom we had teacher ratings were different from those for whom we did not. A second alternative explanation was that teachers' beliefs that a child was in HIPPY accounted for their higher ratings of the HIPPY children.

HIPPY and comparison children for whom teacher ratings were available were compared on a host of pre-test variables including cognitive skills to examine comparability of the groups. Of 33 statistical comparisons, only three were meaningful. In Arkansas, parents of children in HIPPY were more likely to report helping their children learn concepts such as colors, numbers and shapes.[5] In New York, parents of children in HIPPY were more likely to report that they involved the child in daily household chores and had significantly higher expectations for the child's school success.

Next, teacher's beliefs about children's group status were examined. In New York, not one teacher reported believing a child had been in HIPPY. In Arkansas, only half of the HIPPY children were correctly identified as being in HIPPY and twenty-six percent of the comparison children were incorrectly identified as being in HIPPY.

Multiple linear regression analyses were then conducted to determine if the higher CCAI scores for HIPPY children were accounted for by these pre-test differences and teachers' beliefs of child's group status rather than by participation in HIPPY. Even after statistically controlling for all of these variables, as well as variables that differentiated children for whom we had teacher ratings from those for whom we did not,[6] Arkansas boys in HIPPY were rated higher by teachers.[7] In New York, results of these analyses also were consistent with the earlier significant findings. Thus, these alternative explanations did not account for teachers rating HIPPY children as more positively adapted to the classroom.

• Conclusions

These preliminary findings for first grade teacher ratings suggest that participation in HIPPY may have a positive effect on children's classroom adaptation, an important component of school success.

Note that the Arkansas findings cannot be interpreted to indicate that HIPPY does not have positive effects on girls. We know that boys and girls are affected differently by similar experiences. We would not be surprised to find other types of outcome measures to show positive effects for Arkansas girls in HIPPY.

We will continue to follow these children through their early years of schooling to determine the long term effects of HIPPY on other aspects of children's school success, such as academic self-image, placement in special education, and educational achievement.

FOOTNOTES

[1] This study is funded by the United States Department of Education, the Wolens Foundation, the Taubman Foundation, the Rauch Foundation, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

[2] This report does not present data from the Michigan site because the small sample there requires combining data across cohorts.

[3] Preliminary data analyses conducted included a factor analysis demonstrating a single factor loading for all 11 items, and an alpha analysis demonstrating the internal consistency of a composite score of 11 items. The alpha for the composite variable was .96.

[4] In both sites the mean for HIPPY children (boys only in Arkansas) was greater than the mean for comparison children on all eleven items. The probability of this binomial distribution is $p < .006$.

[5] This difference was accounted for by the fact that at pre-test, Arkansas HIPPY families had participated in one to three months of the HIPPY program. Late administration of pre-test was a function of when funding became available.

[6] In New York, families for whom we did not have teacher ratings were more likely to be educated outside the United States. Among HIPPY families in New York, those for whom we did not have teacher ratings had received less social services in the past and had children who scored lower on the measure of cognitive skills.

[7] Because the effects of the intervention were for boys only in Arkansas, the regression analysis entailed testing for the significance of the interaction term between group status and gender, which was entered at the end of the equation. The change in R square for the interaction term was significant, $p < .03$.

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